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By Right Rev. Jeremias Bonomelli, D.D.
BISHOP OF CREMONA

TRANSLATED BY
Right Rev. Thomas S. Byrne, D.D.
BISHOP OF NASHVILLE

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CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES

OR

DISCOURSES FOR ALL THE GREAT FEASTS OF THE YEAR, EXCEPT THOSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

By the

RIGHT REV. JEREMIAS BONOMELLI, D.D.

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The Mystery of the Blessed Trinity

CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES

DISCOURSE I

The Gospel of the Sunday

And Jesus coming spoke to them, saying: All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth; going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.—Gospel, *Matt.* xxviii. 18–20.

God, one in nature or essence, exists in a trinity of Persons. This is the first and greatest mystery of religion, the highest object of our faith. All catechisms and abridgments of our faith begin by professing that there is only one God, the sovereign principle of all things: *"I believe in one God;"* next, they go on to speak one by one of the three Persons, that subsist in one nature, all equal and each distinct from the other, and one proceeding from the other by

an eternal and most simple act; and finally they speak of the works wrought outside the divine Essence by each Person, which are as it were the faint reflection and characteristic note of each.

The liturgy of the Church, which in the course of the year puts before us as in a mirror and in due order the series of works both of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the former the Redeemer, the latter the Sanctifier, closes this series with the works of Pentecost, that is, with the establishment of the kingdom of Christ and of the Spirit, sent by Him on earth, a kingdom which will continue its office until the end of time. What, then, more natural than that the Church should gather up into one feast the whole story of divine revelation and call upon her children to fix their eyes, illuminated by the light of faith, on the Principle, one and trine, from which all things in heaven, on earth, and in hell proceed and by which they are made manifest? After having spoken to them of God, the Principle, one and eternal, without a principle, after having spoken to them of the Father, that measureless ocean of divine Essence, who does not proceed from another, who is of Himself; after having told them that this Father generates of Himself an only Son, equal to Himself, and mentioned the works this Son did after He was made man; and finally after having spoken

to them of the Holy Spirit, who proceeds as eternal Love from the Father and from the Son and diffuses through the Church the flood of divine life, the Church says to all believers: "My children, leaving for a moment all created things and the works wrought by the Son made man and by the Spirit Sanctifier, lift up your eyes, ascend the stream that comes down from heaven to earth, fix your gaze upon the fountain-head, upon the primal origin of all things, and behold God, who is one in essence and trine in Person, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. This is the root, the source from which everything issues forth; this is the supremest synthesis of your faith."

The feast of the Blessed Trinity could not be assigned to a more fitting place than to this Sunday, which follows the feast of Pentecost, the stupendous manifestation of the third divine Person. To-day's feast, my friends, is a fitting crown to all the mysteries of faith, celebrated throughout the course of the year, and brings us back to the point whence we set out—to God one and trine.

In this first Discourse I shall confine myself to a commentary on the Gospel, which the Church selects for us to meditate on and which sets forth very clearly and concisely the mystery of the unity and trinity of God.

The three verses I am to explain are the last three of the last chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew and properly to understand them it will be necessary to show their connection with the verses that go before. In the last chapter of the Gospel St. Matthew gives us an account of the Resurrection, so brief that it could not be made more so; he also narrates Our Lord's appearance to the women and His command to them to go and tell the apostles and to bid them betake themselves to a mountain in Galilee, which He named, and where they saw and worshiped Him. It was on that mountain in Galilee that Jesus spoke to the eleven apostles the words which I have read, which were His last memorial to them, the abridgment of His commission and which I must now explain.

"All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth." These words are the words of Jesus. I beg you to weigh them well, for they are most simple, most clear, and uttered with a confident assurance that must astound us. He who uttered them is a man; only a few days before He was nailed to the cross as a malefactor and died on it between two thieves, the object of deepest love to a few and of execration to a whole nation. True, only a little while before He came forth from the grave by a miracle the like of which was never seen before and never will be

seen again. Consider Him attentively; in Him you see only a man; He has neither an army nor a crown, nor does He want either; He has not a foot of ground whereon to lay His head. And yet He does not hesitate to say with a confidence in which there is not a shadow of doubt: "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth." Either this man is mad or this man is God; there is no other possible supposition, for never was there a man on this earth, who, even in the intoxication of boundless power or in the delirium of pride, was courageous enough to say: "I have all power in heaven and on earth." He might say: "I am all powerful on this earth, and no one is beyond the reach of my arm;" but to add: "I have all power in heaven," this was never heard coming from the lips of man. Now who will be bold enough to say that Jesus was mad? His life and teaching prove Him to have been the wisest of men, and He is hailed as such and admitted to be such even by the apostles of free thought; and even if He were not, the Church, His own creation, which after the lapse of twenty centuries is seen of all the world and grows in extent and number from day to day, is an abiding proof that He was as powerful as He was wise. Therefore these words, so daringly bold and never before heard on earth, prove Him to be God.

"All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth!" What power? In these words of Christ no power is excepted, and when Christ affirms that He has all power, who can even think of putting a limitation to it? To Him, then, belongs power in the order of nature and in the order of grace, the sacerdotal power and the regal power, the power to teach and to rule, the power to judge, to reward, and to punish, a power that endures always and everywhere, in heaven and on earth; "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Note well the words, "*to Me.*" "To Me alone, just as you see Me, and no man on earth or creature in heaven can share any part of it, except I commit it to him when and as I will."

But how is this, O Lord? Thou sayest Thou hast all power without limitation of time or place, and that this power "*is given to Thee*"; but if Thou art God, and this we firmly believe, how canst thou receive power from another? And who can give it to Thee?

Jesus Christ is both God and man. As God, from whom does He receive by generation His nature and all things else? From God the Father. As man from whom does He receive, as from an active principle, His human nature and all that belongs to it? He receives all from God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, from

the one God, the creator, conservator, sanctifier, from the triune God, who does all works outside Himself by one most simple act. Jesus Christ, then, could truly say, both as God and as man, that all power on earth and in heaven was given to Him and that it came to Him from God. It is to be noted, however, that Jesus Christ in saying this referred specifically to Himself as man, since as man He redeemed human nature by His sufferings and death, and here He refers to the power that He confers upon His apostles and their successors to teach and govern His Church, which according to the Scripture language, is His Kingdom, His body, and His spouse.

Let us go on with the commentary. Christ says He has all power in heaven and on earth, and that He commits it to whom He will and as He will. "Now," He says, "I commit it to you, My apostles, and to those who will take up your work after you," for the words that follow imply this and nothing else: "*Therefore* going, teach all nations." These words of Christ can mean only this: "Since you are clothed with My own power, go, exercise it as I have exercised it."

And here we must advert to a truth of the highest importance and one, too, not sufficiently insisted on. The self-same power which Christ had passes to and is poured out by Him

upon the apostles, that is, upon those who govern the Church. The subject is changed,[1] but not the power; the hands into which the treasure passes are changed, but not the treasure itself; the water that leaps from the spring and that which runs in the bed of a river is ever the same, though it may be a thousand miles from its source.

In listening to and obeying the episcopate now living and Pius X, we are listening to and obeying the apostles and Peter, to whom Christ said: "Therefore going, teach."

Looking at things from the point of view of faith we see in the bishops and in the successors to Peter, whatever may be their gifts and their defects, only the apostles and Peter, or rather I should say, only Christ, teaching and governing His Church, and continuing His work of reparation throughout all time.

In the words, "Going, teach," Christ laid two duties upon the apostles. The immediate scope of Christ's coming on earth was to found His Church and thereby to save all men. This Church, in as far as the times and conditions permitted, was to be universal, and hence the

[1] It is hardly necessary to remark that Christ's power, it being His own, and He being God-Man, has no limits; the power of the apostles and Peter has such limits as Christ chose to put to it; they are only His vicars and must exercise the power committed to them according to the rules laid down by Christ. This is clear from the very nature of things.

apostles, to whom her foundation was committed, were forced to go everywhere in order that the word of the Master might be everywhere heard. This is why He says to them: "Going, teach all nations." He seems to say: "I have put into your hands the seed of truth; sow it over all the earth; I have lighted the torch of the Gospel; bear it everywhere and enlighten the whole world; I do not send you to this country or to that, to this kingdom or to that, to this continent or to that; I send you to the entire world and to all nations without distinction: *Going, teach all nations.* All men are God's creatures; God is the Father and Teacher of all men; therefore announce the truth and carry salvation to all and communicate His gifts to all, none excepted: *Teach all nations.* God, who sends you, is the Creator of all and wishes to be the Saviour of all."

And here we must not pass over another very important observation. Listen to it and weigh it well.

The Hebrews, especially as regards religion, were in spirit beyond all comparison the most exclusive of peoples. They shut themselves up in themselves and furiously repulsed anything foreign; they regarded it as a sacrilege to share with foreigners their sacred privileges, unless they consented to embrace their religion, and

even then every sort of difficulty was put in the way. There was no end of precautions. The law of Moses had permeated the Hebrews with this spirit to isolate them from other peoples and thus to provide against their perversion. This rigid religious exclusiveness had penetrated into every fiber of the people; it was their life, their strength; and after so many centuries it still keeps them, though dispersed, a separate race. God was the God of the Hebrews; God's promises were made to the Hebrews; from the Hebrews was to come the Messias who would subjugate all the world and lay it prostrate at their feet. Hence their ferocious hatred and fury against St. Paul, who told them plainly that the salvation preached to the Hebrews was the heritage of all nations as well as theirs. This is an historical fact that needs no demonstration.

Now Jesus Christ had been born among those people; He had grown up and been educated in the most distant corner of Israel, where the spirit of religious and national isolation was more tenacious than anywhere else; and in order not to run counter to this over-zealous sentiment of His countrymen He had never gone beyond the narrow confines of Israel. And yet He commanded His disciples, themselves saturated with the spirit of Judaism, to announce to all peoples the promises made to Abraham and Jacob, to

David and the prophets. By giving the command, "Going, teach all nations," Jesus Christ pulled down the wall of bronze that had shut out Israel from all other peoples; He broke through the prejudice, universal and very ancient, that made truth and divine life the patrimony of a small nation, and He ushered in a new era the like of which none of them had ever so much as imagined.

But it should be borne in mind that, if religions and national egotism had sunk its roots so deep in Israel that it was impossible to pull them out, an egotism not less obstinate pervaded the more polished Gentile peoples. The most commanding intellects, the flower of the philosophers of Greece and Rome, such as Marcus Tullius, were fully persuaded that it was stupid to think of being able to bring all men to profess the same doctrines and to adopt the same rule of life; they held that the knowledge of the more exalted truths was the privilege of superior minds and belonged solely to the aristocracy of higher intellects. Nor is it difficult to understand how this error could have very naturally entered into and found a home in the minds of the most cultured among the Gentiles. If, then, the Hebrews in their national pride claimed a monopoly of truth for their own advantage, the Gentiles did the same for the ad-

vantage of a still smaller number of men, for a privileged class, for the cultured and the philosophers. And yet Jesus Christ, the poor artisan of Nazareth, the lowly teacher of lowly fishermen, the Crucified risen again, said on one of the hills of Galilee to eleven men, uncouth, ignorant of the world, steeped in all the prejudices of the Jews, helpless, destitute of human learning, to men who lived by fishing and on the charity of strangers, and said without the least hesitancy or indecision: "Going, teach all nations." Never had any one before on this earth conceived the design of bringing all men together into one religion, of imposing upon them the same dogmatic and moral teachings, of placing them under the government of one head, and of accomplishing all this, not by force but by persuasion, using as His instrument the words of men the most unfit that it is possible to conceive. This absurd enterprise, this stupid undertaking, is in great part accomplished and is being completed under our very eyes. Let me ask: "If we consider all this attentively and without prejudice, what shall we say of this man? Is He mad?" Madmen can not conceive and carry out without means the most audacious and impossible design that ever came into the mind of man; madmen can not teach the sublimest and most holy doctrine, both theoretical and practical, that

was ever heard upon the earth; madmen can not offer to the world such virtue, the most perfect possible, as we venerate in Jesus Christ.

Who is this Jesus Christ who by these four words: "Going, teach all nations," breaks through all the prejudices of Jew and Gentile, founds a universal Church, rules space and time, and is at this day carrying forward the stupendous work commenced two thousand years ago? Who is He? If He is not a lucky madman, then He is not a man at all. Who, then, is He? The apostles, who lived with Him and knew Him, tell us: "He is the Son of God, the Word made man. He said of Himself: 'I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and I go to the Father.'" Let us adore Him.

And now let us take up again the text we are explaining.

When any one becomes a member of a society, or enters upon an office, or receives a dignity, or becomes part of a social body, or takes service under his country's flag, he requires some external sign or token to show to his comrades and to others that he has embraced a new state, assumed new duties, and acquired new rights and honors. This is what has always been done, what is done now, and what will continue to be done, because man can not make his thoughts and

sentiments known, nor know those of others, except through the senses, and therefore through words and signs. Hence through words and signs must all men be known who enter into Christ's society, take service in His army, and become citizens of His kingdom. Whose right is it to determine what shall be the words, the sacred formula, the sign by which His disciples, the members of the new society, shall be recognized? Of this there can be no question; the right to determine what the sign and sacred formula shall be belongs only to the head, or founder, of the society, namely, to Jesus Christ. And He did determine and prescribe both with the greatest clearness and precision. Here is what He said: "Going, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." [1]

This, my friends, is the sign, these the words by which man is admitted into the kingdom of Christ. This is the sacrament that is the gate of heaven and that is administered in the name of that august Trinity which we adore to-day.

Of all earthly things water is the most common; it covers two-thirds of the face of the

[1] To *baptize* and *to wash* mean the same thing; now *to wash* necessarily implies the idea of water, which is the essential element of Baptism. Hence the word Baptism of itself points out the matter of the sacrament just as the words *to anoint* imply oil.

earth; it distils from the eternal snows that crown the lordly peaks of mountains; it leaps forth perennially from their sides; it runs on in rivulets, streams, and rivers; it is gathered into the basins of great lakes and oceans where it is ceaselessly in motion; it penetrates into the depths of the earth; it is dispersed through the clouds that pass over our heads, fills the measureless fields of the atmosphere, irrigates and fertilizes hills and valleys and plains, and bears everywhere life to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. If a stream of water is found in any desert place or on rocky soil, fresh green grass is also found and flowers and trees, and thither go birds and animals to quench their thirst. And this water, so common that it may be had anywhere, Jesus Christ willed to make the material sign of His followers, the instrument by which to convey to them divine life in the most necessary of the sacraments. Water! It washes and cleanses bodies and beautifies them, and being colorless it purifies them all and resuscitates them all, says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, and flowing over fields and meadows covers them with flowers of every tint and hue. What water does for bodies, washing them clean of every stain, and covering the earth with verdure and flowers, it does by a divine virtue for souls, cleansing them from the stain of original sin and depositing

in them the germs of faith and hope and charity, which later on will burst into bloom and produce flowers of every virtue. This is why Jesus Christ, of all the immense varieties of matter, selected water and willed with it and by it to regenerate men and open to them the gates of His Church and of heaven.

But matter of itself is dumb, and as it is indifferent what form it receives, so it is indifferent what it shall signify; man must determine its signification and its worth and this he usually does by words. Thus, a lamb is made the symbol of Jesus Christ, a dove the symbol of the Holy Ghost, a scale the symbol of justice. Words circumscribe and determine the meaning of things, and this is what Jesus Christ did. "You," He said to the apostles, "you will wash man and to express the meaning of this washing you will add these words: In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The water joined to the words, as the body is joined to the soul, will cleanse away sin, remit the punishment due to it, fill the soul with sanctifying grace, and stamp upon it a character, an indestructible mark, bearing witness that it belongs wholly to God. And since this rite, so simple and yet so majestic, is necessary to all, as necessary as is sanctifying grace, therefore all are privi-

leged to administer it. Such is the goodness and the bounty of its divine institutor. And now, my friends, let us strive to get at the profound meaning of this formula, which came from the lips of Jesus Christ: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

And first of all it is important to get at the meaning of the words: *"In the name."* Among ancient writers and modern, in sacred and profane usage to-day, *In the name* is equivalent to saying by the power, or authority, or right of the one named; on this it is not necessary to insist. Now in the text after the words, *In the name,* the three divine Persons are distinctly and separately named. Let us suppose that these three divine Persons were not equal, but differing in power and nature; could Jesus Christ in this case have put them all in the same rank and made them all peers, saying, *"In the name,"* that is, by the authority or power of each? How could He attribute to all severally the same dignity, power, and nature? When did a monarch ever promulgate a law to his subjects, saying: "In our name and in that of our minister?" How could Jesus make the other Persons equal to God, if they are not so; for if they are not God, then they are but creatures and separated from God by an infinite distance and

are infinitely inferior to Him? It would have been an enormous impiety also for another reason.

By the rite of Baptism man is consecrated to God, becomes His son by adoption, and has stamped upon him His image and character. Would you have man consecrate himself to creatures, for if the second and third Persons named are not God, then they must be creatures? And would it not be impious to consecrate oneself equally to God and to creatures, thus making creatures equal to God? Therefore these three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being given the same rank and the same authority or power, by virtue of the words, "In the name" and not "*In the names,*" are equal; and if equal in authority and power they must be equal in nature and essence, since authority and power, nature and essence are inseparable. This is in outline the argument of the Fathers in maintaining the Trinity against the heresy of the Arians.[1]

The dogma of the Blessed Trinity consists of two distinct terms, the unity of Essence or nature and the trinity of Persons. In the words, *In the name,* we have seen the first term; in the three

[1] The word Trinity, if I remember rightly, was first used by Tertullian, as meaning "*ter unitas vel trium unitas,*" a triple unity or unity of three. It expresses the dogma so felicitously that the Church made it her own and consecrated it by usage.

separate names, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," the trinity of Persons is made clear. Who can doubt it? Every word carries within itself its own proper signification and this can not be the signification of any other word, unless we wish to deceive or to trifle. What, then, does the word *"Father"* signify? Assuredly it means one who gives life to another by generation and who can not possibly be the one generated, unless we are prepared to say that the *generating* and the *generated* are one and the same person. And what does the word *Son* signify? Assuredly it means one who receives life and his whole being from a father and who, therefore, can not possibly be the father, but must be another distinct from him. Who could ever mistake father and son for one person? What do the words *Holy Spirit* signify? Assuredly they signify some sort of emanation from the very nature of one who, by breathing or exhaling, transmits it to another who receives it, and which is therefore different from either the one or the other; and since in God a breath, or an exhalation, or a spirit is infinite, this emanation must be infinite, and therefore a Person. Moreover since He is put, in the order given, on a perfect equality with the Father and the Son, He can not be other than a Person.

These three names, however, must not be taken

to mean three divine attributes or perfections, but three divine Persons, having the same nature and perfectly equal, but distinct as regards the properties singular to each, and which prevent one being confounded with the other.

It is quite possible that certain difficulties may come up to you, arising naturally out of the words, "of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," as used in the Gospel, which of themselves seem to imply an inequality among the Persons, and if so, to subvert the Catholic dogma. The Father must precede the Son, the Father and Son must precede the Holy Spirit, and by reason of this precedence of origin there must also be a precedence of dignity and power. Is not this true?

No, my friends, it is not, and if you will follow me you will be easily persuaded that it is not. We can not reason, nor speak of God, of His essence, of the divine Persons, of their relations and perfections, without moving out from ourselves and from all things round about us; and hence it follows that, whatever conception or idea we may have, or whatever word we may use, what we think and say of God will be always inadequate; all our ideas and all our words are and will always be most imperfect and utterly unequal to give expression to the truth. What are we to do? Are we to leave off thinking and speaking of God

and of divine things? To do so would be to deny God Himself and to offer the greatest indignity to human reason and human feeling. Let us reason and speak of God and of the things of God as best we can, correcting as light is given us the imperfections of our conceptions and the poverty of our language.

From the name and the idea of an ordinary and earthly father, as we know him, we rise to the name and idea of the divine Father, who generates His only begotten Son, and we remove from that idea all those imperfections that are incompatible with the infinite majesty and perfection of God.

Man is composed of body and soul and none of his acts is wholly free from the entanglements of the body; when, therefore, we say that in God there is a Person, who is named and truly is a Father, we must put away every bodily image or conception, for in God there is not the shadow or mixture of anything corporeal.

With us here on earth, subject as we are to the inexorable law of time, the father necessarily exists before the son; but in God, in whom everything is eternal, this idea of precedence in time must be wholly put away; the Father was always the Father, and therefore He always had the Son, generated, but eternally generated, by Him. Did you ever see the sun without light, its daughter

and its emanation? Assuredly not. Thus the Father by reason of origin is before the Son, but not in the order of time, which does not exist for Him; as we say in the Athanasian Creed: "The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal."

With us here on earth the person of the father is separate from the person of the son; they have the same nature but each possesses it in a different way; the idea of this separation of the Father from the Son in God must be put away, for their nature, being one and indivisible and sovereignly spiritual, can not be rent asunder; it is wholly and identical in the Father and wholly and identical in the Son, as the soul of man is wholly in his mind, in his memory, and in his will.

Man may be the father of many children; this idea must be put away in speaking of God the Father, who has only one Son and can have no more. Man, being limited by time and space and nature, evolves gradually and by successive acts and hence his generating force is multiple. God the Father, infinite in essence and eternal, in one single, eternal, and most simple act exhausts His infinite fecundity and therefore can beget but one only Son.

Man is free to be a father or not; his fatherhood depends upon his own free will; this conception as regards God the Father must be put away; He generates His Son by His very nature,

and therefore necessarily, though willingly, and finds infinite delight in Him.

Putting away all these imperfections from the divine Fatherhood, it is clear that God is a true Father, and in a more real sense than is any earthly father. Yes, God is a Father in a more real sense than any earthly father; He is the Father of fathers, the Father by excellence, from whom, as from a first source and sovereign archetype, all paternity comes. He is a Father solely by His own inherent virtue, and to realize His infinite fecundity He has no need of any other being, nor does He share the glory of His fatherhood with another, as is the case with all creatures, who can not beget singly. He is a Father of His very nature, the only true and perfect Father; a Father without having been a son, always a Father, never anything but a Father, eternally a Father. O mystery, on which if we fix our gaze the mind is lost in an ocean of light!

The same is to be said of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the august Trinity. He is a most simple, a sempiternal emanation from the Father in the Son and from the Son in the Father, the breath of the love of both one and the other, that does not separate one from the other, that never ceases and that in one sole essence perfects and consummates their everlasting embrace.

But how all this comes about, how one Person

is distinguished from another, the nature remaining one and the same, and how in God there can be but three Persons; and, further, how the human mind, while it can not comprehend this greatest of mysteries, can conceive of it and find in it sufficient light to see that it is not opposed to reason but in harmony with it, we shall see in the two following Discourses. And now let us take up again the commentary, for there are still two splendid verses to explain.

"You," said Christ to the apostles, "by preaching and baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, will raise up disciples to Me, but is it enough for them to believe and be baptized in order to be saved?" No, faith and Baptism are necessary; they are the foundation of righteousness, but upon this foundation must be built the edifice of good works conformable to faith, and hence Jesus Christ goes on to say: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Do you understand, my friends? Faith and Baptism are the seed of eternal life; the keeping of the law and the doing of good works are the fruit, and a tree that bears not fruit must be cut down and cast into the fire to be burned forever. And yet there are Christians who say: "We are Christians, we have the Faith, we cling to it tenaciously as the most precious of treasures." This is all

very well. But where are the works of faith? What about the observance of the law? He who loves not God can not be saved, and he loves not God who does not keep the law. This Jesus Christ Himself said. Do not deceive yourselves; faith alone will not save you; on the contrary, if it is not accompanied by works it will be your condemnation.

Jesus Christ closes His discourse with a sentence that puts a seal upon all the others, that is, as it were, His last will, the stay and solace of the Church in all her trials. He says: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." A most consoling promise, a superlative comfort to the Church and to every Christian soul. He seems to say in effect: "Ye shall go throughout the whole world; ye shall preach and baptize and continue My work and others will take it up and carry it forward when ye are gone. The work is a great one, as I have told you; it is a toilsome work, and wholly beyond your strength; but have no fear; when you are preaching and baptizing and discharging your other duties in the very midst of the most terrible struggles, I, your teacher, your guide, I, the God-Man, the Lord of all, will be with you. How long? To the very last day, to the end of time. And where I am, who have overcome death and hell, there is victory."

And how will Jesus Christ be always with His Church? In the Blessed Eucharist in which He really lives and is substantially present, as the food of souls and the victim of expiation? Yes; He will abide forever in the Church in the eucharistic sacrament, the center and spring of life. But will He abide only in the Blessed Eucharist? No; He will abide by His grace in the souls of the righteous, who believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him. And this is not all. He will abide forever with His Church as a bridegroom abides with a bride; He will rule her, defend her, and illumine her by the light of His unfailing truth; He will never permit her in her teaching to go aside from the straight way or to become the herald of error.

Once Jesus said: "Whoso hears you, hears Me," and this is the sentiment that He repeats in other words before leaving this earth: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." My friends, do we wish to be with Jesus Christ for all eternity? If so we must be with His Church in time, with the Church that teaches, rules, dispenses the sacraments, and then we shall be with Jesus Christ when time is no more.

DISCOURSE II

The Blessed Trinity According to the Symbol —A Mystery that Transcends Human Reason—Vestiges of the Trinity in Creation

There, say, before me is some object, a stone, a tree, an animal, or a man, which I wish to study and learn something about. How shall I proceed to accomplish my purpose? If I mistake not there are only two ways. We may and should examine and study the stone, the tree, the animal, and the man as they manifest themselves to us externally in their qualities and effects, which come under our senses and which we can subject to experiment. This is the first way, the easier and the more common. But we can go a step further and look more closely into the internal constitution of the stone, the tree, the animal, or the man; we can by the use of a powerful instrument, whether of hand or eye, penetrate into their innermost nature and search their most hidden fibers, number, measure, and weigh the elements of which they are composed, ascertain and fix the laws that govern them and reduce these laws to a certain and invariable code. This is the second way, more difficult than the former, but more perfect, and which only the few can pursue.

Now, my friends, faith and reason set before us the Being of beings, the infinite God. To gain a knowledge of Him we may pursue the two ways I have pointed out; we may study Him and gain a knowledge of Him from His measureless and ineffable outward manifestations in all the works of His hands, as Creator and Conserver, and also as Redeemer, and from the beauty, variety, and greatness of these rise to a knowledge of His existence and of His divine perfections, resplendent in the created universe and in the economy of redemption. But when in presence of the majesty of God, face to face with this infinite Being who creates all things from nothing, preserves, rules, and penetrates them, what are we to do? Are we to prostrate ourselves in fear and trembling, adore Him in religious silence? This is what Gregory Nazianzen [1] bids us do, and we may follow his counsel. But may we, holding in our hand the torch of faith, reverently and fully conscious of our own weakness, penetrate into the mysteries of His divine life, and, as strength is given us, sound the depths of His essence and fix our gaze on the three Persons into whom His life unfolds and upon whom it is poised? This we may also do, and it is meet to do it, after the pattern of the Fathers and walking in their footsteps. "To investigate the Trinity is rash," says

[1] Oration xxxv.

St. Bernard; "to believe it is characteristic of holy souls; to know it is life itself."[1]

Let us, then, approach this mystery of mysteries with humble minds; let us enter into the midst of that blinding light, which because of its excess and of our weakness becomes darkness. And not to miss our way in our progress, the following will be the points which we shall treat in this Discourse, which is only an introduction to the one that follows.

1. We shall see what is the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as set before us by the Church, the infallible Teacher.

2. We shall see how it is impossible to us, wayfarers on this earth and contemplating the eternal truths as in a mirror and obscurely, to *demonstrate* the Blessed Trinity in itself.

3. And, finally, we shall see in creation the shadows, or rather the vestiges of the Blessed Trinity.

And where shall we find the Catholic doctrine with regard to the Blessed Trinity stated precisely and authoritatively? Without doubt in her Creeds or Symbols, and specifically in that of the great Athanasius,[2] where it is fully set forth.

[1] Lib. v, *De Consid.* c. viii.

[2] The Symbol, commonly called the Athanasian, is not the work of St. Athanasius, though it goes under his name because it expresses the teaching of that incomparable champion of the Trinity. This symbol belongs to a later period, for it proscribes the errors of the Nestorians, the Monophysites, the Monothelites,

Here it is word for word in our tongue:

Whosoever will be saved, must, before all things, hold the Catholic faith.

Which, unless every one keep entire and inviolate, he shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly.

Now the Catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For one is the Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son; and such the Holy Ghost.

The Father is uncreated; the Son is uncreated; and the Holy Ghost is uncreated.

The Father is immense; the Son is immense; the Holy Ghost is immense.

The Father is eternal; the Son is eternal; and the Holy Ghost is eternal.

And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.

As also they are not three uncreated, nor three

and the Apollinarists with a precision that shows that it was composed after them in the fifth century. It is said to be the production of Virgil of Tapsa.

immense; but one uncreated, and one immense.

In like manner the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, and the Holy Ghost is almighty.

And yet They are not three almighty, but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

So, likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each Person singly to be God and Lord; so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of no one, nor created, nor begotten.

The Son is from the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; and one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal.

So that in all things, as it hath been already

said, the Unity is to be worshiped in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity.

He, therefore, that would be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the right faith is, that we believe and confess, that Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.

He is God of the substance of His Father, begotten before the world; and He is man of the substance of His mother, born in the world.

Perfect God and perfect man; subsisting of a rational soul and human flesh.

Equal to the Father according to His Godhead; and less than the Father according to His manhood.

Who, although He is both God and man, is still not two; but one Christ.

One, not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood unto God.

One altogether; not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

For as the rational soul and the flesh are one man; so one Christ is God and man.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven; sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give an account of their own works.

And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic faith, which unless a man believe faithfully and steadfastly he can not be saved.

It would not be possible to express more precisely the Catholic doctrine of the fundamental dogma of the Trinity, upon which rests the fundamental dogma of the Incarnation, from which in turn, as from a direct source, come all the others.

The doctrine of the Trinity revolves about two points, the unity of essence, or nature, or substance, as we will, and the trinity of Persons, as the Symbol clearly states. As it is necessary, if we would know what we believe, to define our terms, you will allow me to delay you for a moment in making clear what is meant by nature, or essence, or substance, and by person.

The idea of essence, or nature, or substance, which may be here taken as synonymous, is contained in the answer to the question: "What is

this thing?" You say: "This is water; this is a plant; this is a man." The word *is* tells you the nature of the thing, the genus or class to which it belongs, the base, the root, which is at the bottom of the thing itself. We do not see the substance, or the nature, or the essence; it is hidden in the thing itself, and do what we will it ever baffles our senses.

But this nature is circumscribed, it is determinate, it is presented to us in its specific properties, which set it apart from all other beings, and hence we say: "This is water; this is a cedar; this is a horse."

Let us go a step higher. Here is a man; his nature is determined in a way incomparably more perfect, inasmuch as he understands, reasons, and wills, is master of himself, and it is not possible to confound his nature with any other, and he can say: "*I* exist, *I* live, *I* feel, *I* think, *I* will, *I* am free, *I* am *I*, and *I* can not be other than *I*, *I* Peter, *I* John," and then I say: "Here is the person, here nature has reached its highest degree of determination and of conscious assertion of its own being." Person, then, is not another nature superimposed upon nature, but nature itself in its greatest perfection, and hence *person* is not predicated of inferior beings, but only of man.[1]

[1] Persona significat quod est perfectissimum in tota natura,

Now the divine nature, infinite, immense, wholly, and always in act, from which everything goes forth and from which all perfection is derived, must be sovereignly determined, and hence the idea of person is proper to it as is that of nature. One sole Person? No, that infinite Essence flows necessarily into three Persons. Why into three Persons, and not into one sole Person, as there is only one sole Essence?

Because in God everything is infinite. I will explain. Man is, and thinks, and wills; these are three things or three properties inseparable from his nature; in his nature there are two forces or powers distinct from each other, intellect and will; the latter emanates from the former, as that emanates from him who by it and with it understands and thinks. These three properties, issuing out of the depths of man's soul in such way that each possesses the whole soul and comprehends it, combine in man, because he is finite, into one sole person, into one sole I. In God, who is infinite, each of these properties is infinite, and hence each is a Person, all equal one to the other, because the nature is common to all three and equally possessed by them. The first Person, the

scilicet subsistens in rationali natura. Unde cum omne illud quod est perfectionis, Deo sit attribuendum eo quod eius essentia continet in se omnem perfectionem, conveniens est ut hoc nomen, persona, de Deo dicatur. Non tamen eodem modo, quo dicitur de creaturis, sed excellentiori modo. (St. Thom. p. i, q. 29, a. 3.)

I thinking or *comprehending,* produces the second Person, the *I thought* or *comprehended,* His perfect and substantial Image; and the *I thinking* and the *I thought* produce the eternal and substantial Love, which binds them together, and here we have the third *I,* or the third Person. Hence man has in Himself a reflex and faint image of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and of their relations one to another. But we shall speak of this most profound of the mysteries of faith and of its harmony with reason in another Discourse; for the present we shall show that reason of itself can not satisfactorily demonstrate it.

There were Fathers, and some of the greatest of them, and respectable ecclesiastical writers, relying upon the authority of these Fathers, who maintained that Plato and the Platonic school had a knowledge of the Trinity and that the Trinity, at least after the Gospel revelation, could be demonstrated by reason, as other philosophical truths are demonstrable.[1] But this assertion, when put to the test, could not be made good and had to be abandoned.

The earth, the universe, the order that per-

[1] St. Augustine, St. Cyril, St. Justin, and others either held this or appeared to hold it. Then came Claudian, Mamertus, Raymondus Lullo, Richard of St. Victor, and in our own time August Nicolas, Mastrofini, Rosmini, and a few others who said that, given divine revelation, the dogma of the Trinity could and should be clearly demonstrated by reason.

vades it, reason, conscience, the cry of humanity, all proclaim that there is a God, that He is the primal and sovereign Being, the supreme Director of all things, eternal, all-wise, all-just; but who and what He is in Himself it is not easy to know; we know that He is; we gather from the things that lie in profusion round about us throughout the universe that He must have certain perfections, but what He is in Himself, or what is His inward life, or what are the actions and processions that take place in the unsearchable depths of His nature, it is impossible for us to know, unless through His revelation.

Go in thought through all the works that have come forth from the hands of God, fix the eye of the mind upon them, upon each one of them, study them from every point of view, and you will be forced to confess that you can not search their innermost nature, that beyond what you see and know there is ever something that eludes investigation, that veils itself from your gaze, that baffles all your efforts; and this unfound and unfindable *something* is what lies at the basis of every being, whether material or spiritual. Now if all creatures have something at the very basis of their being that challenges and will ever challenge the most acute observation of the learned, how can they ever hope to penetrate into the depths of the divine Being and to see and con-

template the ineffable acts that take place there? Not only would it be a reckless and intolerable presumption; it would be a madness that could only be pitied. No, we can not know God except by rising step by step through creatures to Him, who is their creator and conserver; by going up from the visible to the invisible, from what is temporal to what is eternal, reasoning from effect to the Cause, to the primal Cause of all things. And this is the only way that philosophers and theologians of every age and country, Christian and non-Christian, have pointed out to us and that they themselves have traversed. All creatures, then, tell us that they are effects and that God is their cause, they bear upon them the seal of the cause, and this cause is one and only one, God, not trine, but one. I will illustrate this by a similitude. Here, say, is a statue; what does it say of itself? It says that there is a sculptor and that it is his creation. In making it he first conceived the idea of it, thought this out in his mind and formed an image of it; next, by an act of his will he determined to produce the image in marble; he then proceeded with chisel and hand, guided by the eye, to complete the work. Looking upon the statue you see at once that the sculptor was the cause of it; that it had only one cause, and you could not even imagine that more causes than one, if I may so express myself, com-

bined together in a single act to produce the statue.

Catholic theologians, following the lead of St. Thomas, teach that the acts of God, outside God, that is, those whose term is creatures of whatever kind, are referred to God as He is one in His essence, precisely as the acts of man, outside man, proceed from him as he is one sole agent, although his intellect and will concur in producing them. These acts, outside God, proceed from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, but not in that they are distinct, but in that they are one sole God, one sole nature, and therefore their effects represent or exhibit God as only one, as only one nature, and it is not possible for them to represent Him in the trinity of Persons. These are produced by the internal acts of knowledge and love, which remain in the divine Essence.[1] It is, then, impossible for man by reasoning from creatures to God to gain a knowledge of the trinity of Persons; he gets a faint glimmer of it or, as I may say, an indistinct notion, but by no means can he obtain a clear knowledge of it or a certain demonstration.

And now if we subject the doctrine of Plato and of other philosophers, ancient and modern,

[1] St. Thomas expressly teaches this in p. i, q. 32, where he says in explicit terms: Per rationem naturalem cognosci possunt de Deo ea quae pertinent ad unitatem essentiae, non autem ea quae pertinent ad distinctionem personarum.

who seem to include the dogma of the Blessed Trinity among those truths demonstrable by reason, at least after the Gospel revelation, to a critical examination we shall find that their arguments are defective, that they are hypotheses rather than theses, that they are analogies, similitudes, resemblances, rather than truths demonstrated and put beyond all controversy. Any one who affirms that he finds the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Trinity clearly set forth in Plato, shows that he has not read Plato, or, having read him, has not done so attentively, since the teaching of Plato on this point presents such and so great divergencies from the Catholic doctrine, that, if the former be accepted, the latter will be not only changed, but absolutely destroyed.[1]

Hence, following in the footsteps of St. Thomas and of the great theologians who express the sense of the Church, we say that the Trinity is God's secret, that it is the mystery of mysteries, and we have only to believe and adore.

But although the Blessed Trinity is a mystery, let none of you fancy for a moment that it is a doctrine or a dogma that shocks or in any way does violence to human reason. A *mystery* does not mean any thing or doctrine *contrary* to reason,

[1] See Monsignor Freppel in Justinus, and also Monsabré, Conf. ii.

but some thing or doctrine *superior to* or *beyond* reason, some thing that really exists but that baffles its efforts and whose inward relations it can not grasp and make its own.

My friends, the material and intellectual, the moral and social world is full of facts and phenomena concerning which there is not the least doubt, which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands, the reasons for which we seek fretfully and anxiously but in vain; we call them *mysteries of nature,* very different of course from *mysteries of faith,* for while an intrinsic explanation may or will be found of the former, such an explanation of the latter will never be found on this earth. And yet who will be bold enough to deny these *facts* and *phenomena* of nature, though the intrinsic reason of their existence remains hidden? Certainly no one, for a *fact* or a *phenomenon may be certain* though all the while it is *unexplained* and *inexplicable.* The existence of a thing may be beyond all doubt, and yet the mode of its existence is shrouded in densest darkness. Such are the dogmas of our faith, such is the dogma of the Blessed Trinity, which, while it is clearly revealed and imposed upon our belief by Christ, is not explained or explainable in a way in which the reason can comprehend it and make it its own.

We say and we profess that there is a mystery of one sole Essence and three equal Persons, because God has revealed it, but in saying so we neither say nor profess a doctrine that antagonizes reason, as we do not antagonize reason when we recognize in man the union of a material substance with a spiritual substance in one person, or when we admit the transmission of force from one body to another, and its action at enormous distances, although we do not know how this union is effected, or how force is transmitted and acts at a distance; nay, although we do not even know what the soul is or what matter and force are in themselves.

But it is objected: Is it not to do violence to reason to assert that God is at one and the same time but *one* and yet *trine?* If He is but *one* He can not be *trine,* and if He is *trine* He can not be but *one.*

Just a moment, my friends. We say that God is but *one* in nature, and that He is *trine* in Persons, which is something quite different. When I say of man: "You are but one, and yet in a very true sense, you have two natures, or you are one in two natures," do I do violence to reason, or do I not speak according to reason? Again I say of man: "Your soul is *but one,* one sole *I,* a most simple *I.* You avow it and feel it; and yet your intellect is not your will, and your intellect and

your will are not your memory, although your intellect is your whole soul, as is your will and as is your memory. You are, then, but one soul, but one substance, and yet you are three powers or faculties, each one distinct from the others; you are one because of the oneness of the substance of the soul, and you are trine because of the three faculties in which or through which the soul incessantly exercises its energies. Are you, then, a manifest contradiction? I leave the answer to you.'' Not only does reason find no contradiction in the dogma of the Blessed Trinity, since this would be impossible, but I assert and I shall prove that it can find none whether now or at any future time. How am I to do this? Follow me attentively and judge for yourselves.

A contradiction means a perfect and complete opposition of one thing or one term to another, so that the one excludes the other. Thus, a triangle is a square, the immutable is mutable. Evidently these two propositions are contradictory, since a triangle can not be a square, nor a square a triangle, nor can the immutable be mutable, nor the mutable immutable. And why? Because my mind, knowing with absolute certainty the two terms, sees that one is antagonistic to the other and that the two mutually exclude each other. But if my knowledge of the

two things or of the two terms is doubtful or indefinite, I can not safely affirm that one is antagonistic to the other, since if two things or terms are doubtful or indefinite, they make it impossible for me to say what would be the consequence of a comparison of one with the other, and hence such consequence must also be doubtful and indefinite. This is a truth that needs no demonstration. Now in speaking of the Blessed Trinity the terms that are to be compared are the Essence, which is but one, and the Persons, which are three. Do I know what the divine Essence is? I know that it exists, that it is eternal, infinite, immutable, and that it infinitely transcends my poor intelligence. And the same is to be said of the Persons; they are eternal, infinite, immutable, and transcend the powers of any created intelligence, even of the highest of the heavenly spirits. Hence I do not know, and I shall never be able perfectly to know the two terms of the dogma of the Blessed Trinity, namely, the oneness of Essence and the trinity of Persons. And this being the case I can never affirm that these two terms are antagonistic to each other and involve a contradiction; for to do so would be to draw a certain conclusion from the comparison of two terms imperfectly known and shrouded in obscurity and to say: "They are contradictory." Here, say, is an astronomer

who fixes his eye upon a star lost in the limitless depths of the heavens; he applies the parallax; the two lines drawn upon a common side and reaching away millions and millions of leagues are parallel, and he says: "It is impossible to measure the distance," and it is true. But are these two lines really parallel? The eye and the most careful experiment tell us that they are parallel; but reason tells us with greater certainty that it is impossible that they should be parallel; I can not detect the inclination, but I know that it exists. And we should with greater reason say the same when we think we discover a contradiction between the unity of the divine Essence and the trinity of Persons. The unmeasured and immeasurable distance between us and God creates a profound obscurity, and to us looking through that darkness, the effect of our limited vision, it seems that a unity of Essence can not be reconciled or exist together with a trinity of Persons. It would be the part of true wisdom to say: "God has said that He is one in nature and trine in Persons; I can not comprehend it, and it is natural that I, being finite and so insignificant, can not comprehend it and to me it seems contrary to reason; but God makes no mistake and He can make none; to me it is enough to say: I believe. Does not a son believe his father, a pupil his teacher, and

a servant his master, even when they do not understand what is said and what at times seems to them contrary to reason, because they feel sure they are not deceived? Certainly, and this is the part of wisdom. Why shall not I do as much in regard to God, my Father, Teacher, and absolute Master? I should be foolish not to do so, and therefore I do it."

But for all this is it true that our reason sees nothing in the Blessed Trinity that answers to its needs? Nothing that sheds light upon the mind and in a measure introduces it into the secrets of the inward life of the Trinity? No; reason can not supply us with a formal and complete demonstration of the divine Trinity, but it can find here and there in creation the shadows of it. Let us take a look at these shadows, or these vestiges of God one and trine in the works of His hands.

Greek wisdom, represented by Aristotle, laid down this aphorism or epigraph: *"Every three is perfect. Omne trinum est perfectum."* It held this number to be sacred, and this apothegm has ever been repeated among many peoples ancient and modern. What is the explanation of the fact and whence its origin? It does not seem unlikely that it must be sought in an ancient and venerable tradition, hidden in the mists of time and running back to the origin of the human family, and that it is possibly an

echo of a divine revelation. This opinion is confirmed by another fact still more worthy of consideration. As we have already said, we are very far from admitting that the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as taught by Holy Writ and professed by the Catholic Church, is to be found in Plato. The difference between the two teachings is too great and too essential to allow us to accept as reliable the opinions of some Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, who thought that in Plato they could recognize a precursor of St. John the Evangelist. Still it is withal true that the great Plato discerned in God a sort of Trinity after his own fashion, and it is also true that some shreds of this doctrine may be discovered scattered up and down the writings of the Greek poets and philosophers and in their mythology. It is further true that in the Sacred Books of Persia and India and imbedded in nearly all the religious beliefs of peoples, under forms more or less explicit, expressions and symbols are to be met with which clearly enough allude to a trinity in the divine Being. Now can the existence of this notion, doubtlessly confused and at times contradictory, of a divine Trinity, be accounted for without referring it back to a primitive tradition, disfigured as time went on, or to a vague presentiment of human nature, which is conscious in itself of a

shadow, a far-away echo, of the mystery which God conceals in the abyss of His being? Whatever may be its origin, the fact is undeniable and it is a footprint of this august mystery.

Nor is this all. Let us search matter, organic or inorganic, which we see and handle. Why does this stone, this crystal, this inanimate body, the single parts and atoms of which are so intimately bound up together, present to me the form which I look upon? Because in all its parts, no matter how small, even the least, there resides an invisible active force which binds into one all its atoms, and forms the body before me. This force is distinct from the matter which it attracts to itself and unites and consolidates in ways so diverse and wonderful. Here, then, we have two distinct principles, matter and force, or form, if we prefer this term. But two distinct terms can not be conceived without some sort of relation or link between them; and hence in matter itself we see a footprint, or vestige, barely visible it is true, but still a vestige of a being that is but one, and yet reveals to me something of the trine.

Matter, whatever be its nature, or its form, or shape, can never have but three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness. Throw matter into what shape you will and you always find that it is subject to these three dimensions,

length, breadth, and thickness; they may be woven into one another and jumbled altogether in the same body, and yet they form but one body, while each remains distinct from the other and one can not be mistaken for the other. And in matter have we not also number, weight, and measure, three distinct properties in one single thing?

And as St. Anselm observes, look at water; it is ever the same, whether in its source, in the running stream, or in the sea into which the stream empties; and thus it is with the Essence in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Look at the sun; it is only one immense body, all light and all heat; the light is not the sun, nor the heat, nor are heat and sun the light; they are three distinct things in one single substance, and each is at once inseparable and distinct from the others. Look at the tree; it is one single substance, starting with the root, and expanding into the trunk and maturing in the fruit; always three distinct things in one sole substance.

It is unnecessary to say that these similitudes, taken from nature, which is the lowliest expression of creative activity and the limit most distant from God, are all but faint images of Him.

Look at animal life; life itself, a part of one, is envolved by union with a second, and is com-

pleted by the production of a third; in three beings, separate and distinct, there is but one sole nature.

The human family is made up of father, mother, and child. Society itself, a development of the family, like the family demands an organizing principle which resides in authority, a principle to be organized, or the multitude, and the means of binding the two together, or the force of the law; a principle personal or collective, subjects, and the multiple ties that bind one to the other.[1]

Look at man; consider his nobler part, the soul; it is only a single and most simple substance, as was said above, and from it ceaselessly emanate two faculties, the intellect and the will, two principles proceeding the one from the other and necessarily supposing a first principle, the fountain of both, and all these subsisting in one single common substance. But of this image of the Trinity, the most beautiful and perfect to be found in created beings, I shall speak at length in the next Discourse.

[1] M. Moliere, a leading physician in the hospital at Lyons, who died three years ago, published a large volume, in which by long and patient labor and with singular acumen he shows how the shadow of the Trinity is constantly appearing in the family and in society. At times he is brilliant and ingenious rather than solid, but his comparisons are most felicitous. I had the honor and pleasure of knowing this very learned man and profound believer at La Combe, in the castle of M. A. Du Boys, in the Delphinate.

And here we must not pass over other and beautiful analogies which shadow forth the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

The inalienable characteristic of man is that he reasons; now to reason it is necessary to form a judgment, and a judgment, the basis of all reasoning, is made up of three terms, neither more nor less; the subject, the predicate, and the tie between them; for example, "the sky is cloudless." Here are two terms, *the sky* the subject, *cloudless* the predicate, and then the verb *is* that ties them together. All possible judgments may be reduced to these three terms, which taken together form one sole judgment.

Man reasons and forms judgments, and two judgments, compared one with another, produce a consequence; and here we have the syllogism, the supreme form of all reasoning; a general proposition, a particular and a consequence, which arises out of a comparison of the two propositions, three in one and one in three.

Finally, consider the form of all words, of all times, of all countries, of all grammars, of all peoples; this form presents constantly but three persons, *I, thou,* and *he,* and you may rack your head as you will and you can never add a fourth person.

What does all this come to, my friends? Have I demonstrated the ineffable mystery of the

Trinity? Certainly not. I have set before you some similitudes, some vestiges, some images, that in a way shadow forth the Catholic dogma, clear it up somewhat, lessen the difficulty of making it the subject of our thoughts, and render it humanly speaking more conceivable and more easy to believe.

And now can we, pursuing the same course, rise to greater heights, approach closer to this blinding light and fix upon it our mortal eyes, illuminated by the light of faith? Yes, we can, and I ask you to follow me in the next Discourse.

DISCOURSE III

The Blessed Trinity and Human Reason

All things that are come forth from God, who draws them out of nothing and scatters them in profusion outside Himself on a stupendous scale, that goes on diminishing by imperceptible shadings from the highest seraphim to the smallest grain of sand, to the minutest atom, where the creative force terminates and disappears. All created things are like to a majestic river that gushes forth from its source and bears its waters on to the sea. He who lives on the seashore or on the banks of the river and wishes to find its source must ascend the stream and little by little and toilsomely arrive at the virgin spring. All things, and we together with them, come from God and to gain a knowledge of Him we must retrace our steps, and ascending through them go up to their Cause, the God-Creator. If I wish to enter into and read the minds of Michael Angelo and Alighieri it would be folly to think of looking directly into them; I must contemplate the works of the former and read attentively the "Divina Commedia" of the latter and in doing so I shall be able in a measure to penetrate into the minds of these two great men.

So shall we do to-day, my friends, if we will enter into the innermost life of God; we shall by means of creatures, as by so many rounds of a ladder, mount up toward that highest, inaccessible height, where God Himself dwells and where all is flooded with light and withal veiled in cloud.

On our journey upward we shall make three landings, and having gained the first landing, or that of all living creatures, we shall see as if in a rough sketch the distant footprints of the Trinity. And having arrived at the second landing, or that of all rational creatures, we shall see in them a more perfect outline of His image. Still looking upward with the mind's eye illuminated by faith, and, in as far as our weakness will permit, fixing it upon the infinite Being, who is above all, and brushing away the shadows and the illusions that are ever multiplying, flitting here and there, and thickening between us and Him, we shall see Him, one in His impenetrable Essence and trine in the forms or Persons in which He manifests Himself. The journey is long and arduous, because it leads across the world of bodies and of spirits and on at last to the very heights of God; still, having as our guide to light the way, the double torch of faith and reason, we shall safely push on and arrive without stumbling at the goal.

Let us open again the great book of nature, on whose pages God has left the marks or footprints of His passing; let us study it intently with the eye of the mind and strive to discover them.

Wherever we look,[1] beneath our feet, round about us, out upon the earth or into its depths, in the water or in the air, we see life everywhere unfolding and luxuriating in every variety of form and color. It is a strange and a marvelous phenomenon and I ask you to consider it attentively, for it is worth while. Every organic being, whether vegetable or animal, by some secret, instinctive, and irresistible force, is wholly and always intent on its own preservation, so that each makes itself a center and disposes all things with a view to self, as to an end. The constant and supreme law governing all its activity is to preserve, develop, and perfect its own life, to which, if need be, it sacrifices the life of others. And side by side with this conservative, and, I had almost said, sovereignly selfish force, which draws all things to itself, which makes itself a center and revolves about itself, and which would make everything its own, there appears another force, not less constant and potent, the force that impels it to communi-

[1] Here I reproduce with slight modifications, Lesson V of my work, Fundamental Lessons for the Higher Schools of Religion, p. 68.

cate itself in a variety of ways, but in one in particular, the most perfect of all, namely, in reproducing itself. The grain cast into the earth develops the life within it; first comes a shoot and then a tree, whose branches bend under the weight of fruit, which enclose thousands of seeds, and the wind, shaking branches and fruit, carries these seeds on its wings into far-away lands, scattering them over mountain and plain, and everywhere a multiplied life springs into being and unfolds into leaf and flower. What an amazing fecundity in a single seed!

Note the insect, the smallest of insects, which in the first tepid days of April goes buzzing from flower to flower; it bears under its gauzy wings thousands of lives that in a few short months will swarm through the air.

The bird, perched on a branch and basking in the bright sunshine, salutes the glories of May; it builds its nest, deposits there its eggs, warms them with its downy feathers, and imparts to them its own life. All the countless living things in rivers and lakes, in the depths of the sea and in the boundless spaces of the air, all without exception possess fecundity, and this fecundity, their own life remaining intact, makes them give forth other lives without number. What in reality is the earth with the two great oceans that cover it and enclose it, the ocean of

water and the ocean of air, but the cradle and the grave of life, which is ever being re-born and is ever dying, which is preserved and reproduced under the breath of love in the mystery of generation?

And observe that every living thing, whether in the vegetable or animal kingdom, communicates and propagates precisely the life itself possesses, a life perfectly like its own and identical with it, and yet separate from it; a fish reproduces a fish, an insect an insect, an eagle an eagle, a lion a lion, and so on. The generator can not reproduce a being either superior to or inferior to itself, but always reproduces one like to itself, of its own nature and species, since the generated is as it were the continuation, the indefinite prolongation of the generator, and is one with it.

And again: I beg you to be attentive to this consideration, for it is very important. The mode of communication or reproduction by generation increases in perfection in the measure in which nature increases in perfection, and here we have a wonderful gradation from the vegetable seed to the mollusk, on to the coral and up and up to the amphibians, the ovipara, and to the most perfect vivipara. The propagation of life in inferior beings is so numerous as to appear incredible, and it would seem that the multiplic-

ity of offspring is a compensation for the lack of perfection; whereas the offspring of higher beings decreases in the direct ratio of their excellence or perfection. This is a universal law that any one may ascertain and verify.

And now as to ourselves. It is a fact most clearly evident that all beings endowed with life, even with the faintest thread of life, are also endowed with fecundity, that is, with the potency, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says, of living again and perpetuating themselves in other beings, that owe to them their life and resemble them. This is a force, a sublime perfection, a perfection and a force by which beings become the principle and fountain of life. Now I ask, whence comes the fecundity and perfection that we see everywhere through the endless scale of living beings upon our globe? Whence is it derived? You answer with one voice: From nature, or from the forces inherent in every living being. And your answer is perfect. And whence does nature derive this wonderful force of reproducing itself? Does it supply it to itself, and is it the fruit and product of its industry? It would be stupid to think so. Nature finds this fecundity in itself antecedent to any effort of its own. Is it derived from some blind, primal force inherent in nature itself? If so matter would be eternal, always both active and passive,

inexhausted and inexhaustible, and we should be obliged to admit spontaneous generation and a whole heap of absurdities. Could life, the most stupendous thing, the very apex of all things existing on this earth, be the product of blind force, unconscious and operating at hazard? Reason requires that the generating force shall come, together with nature, primarily and in its origin from the Author of nature, from God the Creator, from Him who deposited in it that great germ which as centuries come and go is not extinguished and does not grow old. If, then, the fecundity that fills the universe, that incessantly propagates and preserves life in an infinity of forms, comes from God, if the effect is necessarily and most perfectly antecedently contained in the cause, we must conclude that God, the primary Cause of all life, is Himself prolific; that He also must be a Father, since "of Him," to use the phrase of St. Paul, "all paternity in heaven and earth is named." And God, speaking by the mouth of Isaias, says of Himself: "Shall not I that make others bring forth children, Myself bring forth? Shall I, that give generation to others, be barren?"[1] In these two magnificent sentences of Isaias and St. Paul is contained a splendid and strong argument which may be thus stated: All living beings are

[1] lxvi. 9.

the effects of a cause and all living beings are prolific; therefore it must necessarily be admitted that God, the Primary Cause, is prolific. Every living being on earth is or may be a father, therefore God, the Primary Cause, must be a Father. The more perfect the living beings of earth are, the more perfect also is their paternity, and therefore the more nearly they approach unity; therefore the Divine Paternity should be most perfect and should exhibit the greatest and the most absolute unity.

The argument is as luminous and perfect as a ray of light. The whole earth in every age and at every moment proclaims by the tongue of millions and millions of its living and generating beings that God lives, and generates, and is a Father.

Whose Father? The Father of all creation, some scientists reply. The universe, they say, is the product of the divine fecundity, the child of the eternal and infinite Being. No, answers reason in protest. What reasonable man will say that the pretty nest which the goldfinch has built for itself on the branch of a tree is its offspring? Who will say that the Moses in the Church of San Pietro in Vinculis, or the Perseus in Florence are children, the former of Michael Angelo and the latter of Cellini? You will say that these are their productions, the

creations of their genius, the works of their hands, but not their children in the rigorous sense of the word. Thus creation is the work of God, the Creator, but is not the Son of God the Father? Fecundity by generation implies the communication of the substance, which is the same in the generating and the generated, in the father and the son. The works of the hands of men do not participate of their substance; they are the productions of their labor, made in the image and likeness of their minds, which as mirrors reflect their thought and their will; but they are not in any true or proper sense emanations of their being. The world, the entire universe, is a production external to God; it is an outward copy of His thought and will; it is His creation—but by no means is it generated by Him. God is a substance infinite, eternal, immutable, indivisible, and most simple; the universe is a substance limited, temporary, mutable, divisible, and composite; it can not, then, be an emanation from God; it is not and it can not be the fruit of His fecundity, the Son of the Eternal, consubstantial with Him, and in all things equal to Him. Therefore this Son must be sought in His bosom, in the bosom of the Father, eternally proceeding from Him, as light from the sun. And this Son must be one and one only, for more than one would argue that the first

act was defective and impotent and that it must go on completing itself by successive acts. We said, and we repeat, the more perfect a being is, the more its acts are simplified and approach to unity. Now the act by which the infinite Being unfolds its inward life is an act of infinite perfection, since it takes place in God and terminates in God, and in God all is God; therefore He must unfold Himself in one most simple act, in one single instant, the immanent instant of eternity. But of this we shall speak more at length presently.

Admitting the duality of living things, the one proceeding from the other, in the necessary identity of a common nature, there must also be admitted to exist between the two some sort of relation, some tie that binds them together, and this must be of the nature of the living beings themselves, like them, eternal, immutable, indivisible, and most simple. In beings destitute of reason, as in the vegetable kingdom, this bond is continuity; it is instinct in animals, and love in beings endowed with reason; and this we shall see presently.

Thus far we have spoken of the fecundity of creatures of matter, a gross fecundity and imperfect, since it implies the separation of the generated from the generating; and from this point we have gone onward and upward to the divine

fecundity, of which the former is but the faintest shadow. And now let us put out of our minds and our conceptions everything that is composite and corporeal, everything that is subject to sense; let us dauntlessly push forward and cross the extreme bounds of what is corporeal and sensible; let us shut out all the phantoms and shadows that the world of matter casts across our path, which are like to the shadows that dense foliage casts upon a clear and limpid stream. Trusting to the guidance of St. Augustine and St. Fulgentius, of St. Anselm and St. Bonaventure, but especially of St. Thomas, let us enter into the soul; let us go forward until we come to the point where the luminous wave of thought leaps forth and expands, and farther still, to where the flame of will and love is lighted.

What do I see down in the inaccessible depths of my spirit, down at the very springs of thought, whence dart the sparks of love? There *I* feel, *I* am conscious that *I* exist, *I* reflect upon myself and *I* say, "*I am.*" You may heap up sophisms by the hundred but you never can make me mistrust the voice of my conscience; which from the bottom of my soul cries to me: "You are, you exist." From this soul, which is my very self, which is one and one only, most simple and indivisible, just as my *I* is one and only one,

there comes forth as a flower from its calyx, as water from a fountain, as a ray of light from the sun, my thought; and in this thought, as in a clean and polished mirror, I contemplate and admire at my leisure both my own being and all objects and truths that I wish to pass in review, and all images of the outward world and their countless relations. And now tell me: Am *I* who think, *I* who reason and discourse, am I distinct from this thought on which I keep the eye of the mind fixed? Yes, I am distinct from it, of this I can not doubt, because I say, "*My* thought," and if I call it *mine* there must be between it and me some distinction. My thought is set before me as a book that I read, and I feel and see that it is the object, while at the same time I fully comprehend that I am the subject that thinks; how, then, is it possible not to distinguish in my soul the thinking *I* from the thought itself, the emanation of the *I*? But while this thought is distinct from me, is it also separated or separable from me? Certainly not; the thought is in me, is distinct from me, forms one with me; it is I who think; I and my thought are two and yet we are but one. As I can not separate light from the sun, or weight from the body, or heat from the flame, so neither can I separate my thought from myself, and I know that it is always my whole soul that acts in my

thinking *I* and that all my soul is my thought.

And whence emanates this thought that is distinct from me and yet inseparable from me, which is outside me and yet within me? It emanates wholly and always from my soul, which withal remains one and indivisible, just as my thought is one and indivisible. The thought is the ray, the child of the mind, into which it puts all its energy, and speaks to itself face to face.

My mind producing and generating of itself and in itself, its own thought is not harmed or changed, is not increased or diminished, and it makes no effort; it remains always one and indivisible, just as the sun, in sending forth its light, suffers no sort of change.

The sun generates and pours out light and is prior to the light, not in the order of time, but solely of origin, and it generates and pours out light without intermission and always equally. The sun is wholly the light and its light is wholly the sun, its substantial production and its necessary and spontaneous evolution.

Let us go on still further in our journey. My mind generates thought. Thought presents me a vivid and clear image of a thing and in language silent but most clear tells me what it is, and hence this image is properly called and is a *word.* When in my mind, in the firmament of my soul, I contemplate an idea or an image of

anything true, beautiful, and perfect of its kind, what takes place in my inmost being? My soul, as if touched and invested by an electric current, is startled and agitated and from its inmost depths it feels another and a new force being released, which gently but forcibly takes possession of it, urges it on and impels it to go out to the object known to be true, beautiful, good, and perfect and to unite itself to it and to form one with it. This movement of the whole soul toward the object known is always in proportion to the beauty, goodness, and perfection which the soul recognizes in it and of the strength of the soul itself. This movement, this expansion and outpouring of the soul, is called *will,* or *love,* which in substance are the same, since what is *willed* is *loved.* It springs up in the soul the very instant the object is known, and hence it may be called the child of the intellect; it goes out from the mind that recognizes the object, it throws itself upon this object, and in it finds its contentment, its happiness, and its beatitude. The thought that springs up in the mind and forms an image there is the lightning that flashes out in its firmament, the love that immediately follows is the thunderclap that is released; the former is the light that shines out, the latter the heat that the light diffuses; the former is the flower that rejoices the eye with the brilliancy of its

color, the latter the fragrance that is shed abroad and delights the sense of smell, two things in one, two qualities in one substance.

We know; this is the first emanation or procession that takes place in the soul and abides there. We will and we love; this is the second emanation or procession; it is determined by the first and, like the first, abides in the soul and is always in proportion to it. These two processions are completed with the greatest possible rapidity, like lightning, in the interior of our soul; simultaneously, not forcibly or painfully, but joyously, in such way that the soul as a whole thinks and knows, wills and loves, and so naturally and easily that we are scarcely conscious of its action. Hence, we must conclude that the soul primarily *is,* next that it *knows,* and finally that it *wills* or *loves,* and in loving the whole cycle of its activity, of its processions and interior effusions, is exhausted, and it is absolutely impossible to add another to these.[1]

Here we must not omit an important observa-

[1] It may be said that in the human soul there are also the *imaginative* faculty and liberty. These two are not processions, but faculties of properties of the soul. The *imaginative* faculty is but a sensible element which serves as an instrument relatively to the outside world; it supplies representations of the material world and is serviceable to the intellect in that it sets before it that matter upon which it exercises itself. Liberty is an endowment of the will and does not include in its conception an internal procession; it is a condition for the exercise of the will. The *processions,* then, are only two, intelligence and will.

tion. We have already seen that the property of thought, the first internal procession of the soul, is that it is the image of the thing thought, whatever that may be; on the contrary the character or property inherent to the second internal procession, or that of the will or of love, is that it is simply an emanation, an outpouring, a force, an energy, which goes out from the being thinking and pours itself into the thing apprehended and presented by the image or by the idea; its characteristic property is to serve as a bond of union between the *I thinking* and *the object thought;* it is like the life-giving sap that ascends from the root through the trunk and branch, uniting the root with the flower and fruit, the first seed with the new seed, which is blooming and maturing on the top of the tree. In the words of a great theologian and philosopher, the word, that is, the idea, the image, the concept of the mind, does not divide the substance of the soul, although it is distinct from the action that generates it; it stirs the soul, attracts it to itself by means of the objects whose beauty it illuminates, and causes it to produce a second act, namely, love, an act distinct from the power from which it emanates, distinct from the word, which stirred this power into action, and still united to it in the same substance, and these three are but one. *Tres sunt et hi tres unum sunt.* This

is what St. Augustine teaches in a hundred passages: "I *am*, I *know* that I am, I *love* to be and to know; I *am*, I *think*, I *love*."[1] This is the triple manifestation of the spirit of man, bearing in itself the image of the divine Being, threefold in *being*, *thinking*, and *loving*.[2]

And now we go up to the third landing and lift ourselves above our own mind, which, being but finite, unfolds its powers in a multiplicity of intellectual and positive acts. Let us mount up from creature to creature, from mind to mind, from the spirit of man, that from things of sense furnishes matter for the intellect, to incorporeal spirits, that think without the aid of forms or sensible images, and, in as far as is possible to our weakness, let us fix our mental gaze upon

[1] If the limits of a note permitted I should willingly reproduce here five stupendous articles from St. Thomas (I, p. q–27). Faithful to the great principle that we must rise from effect to cause, from the sensible to the supersensible, and especially from man to God, he proves that two processions must be admitted, one through the intellect and the other through the will, or love; that the former is properly called generation and the latter simply procession; and that in God there can not be any other processions. His conclusion is stated in these words: "Actiones in natura intellectuali et divina non sunt nisi duae, intelligere et velle. . . . Relinquntur igitur quod nulla alia processio possit esse in Deo nisi Verbi et Amoris" (Art. 3).

[2] This image of the Blessed Trinity, which appears in the soul of man and which I have striven to bring out, is very beautiful, but to adequately apprehend requires a mind that can study its own workings and is capable of making a very subtle analysis of what goes on within it. I beg the reader to enter into himself and to realize the two processions, the one of the intellect and the other of the will, that take place within him and are perfected in the depths of the soul.

that Being, which is above every being, which contains all things in itself and in a way sovereignly perfect, as the First Cause must contain all effects, which is the primal Being, which puts all things in motion and is itself motionless, which is of itself, and addressing which the prince of poets and the profound theologian says:

> O Luce eterna, che sola in te fidi,
> Sola t'intendi, et da te intelletta
> E intendente te ami ed arridi.[1]

Let us fix our gaze upon that ocean of light and, brushing aside all the shadows of the world of sense and all finite things of spirit, contemplate for a moment the evolutions and processions of its inward life, which transcends the powers of every created intellect.

That sovereign Being, infinite, eternal, one, most simple, exists of itself; it is because it is; its activity, like its Being, is wholly and always and equally in act; nay, properly speaking, its Being is wholly and always a most pure act. To say that it is wholly and always a most pure act is to say that there is not an iota in it that is in potency and passes thence into act. A seed is a tree in potency; the mind of the child holds in

[1] O eternal Light, that alone dwellest in Thyself,
Alone understandest Thyself and art alone by Thyself understood,
And understanding Thyself, lovest and enjoyest Thyself.—Can. xxxiii.

potency all the knowledge and all the acts of the will that will later on be unfolded; all created beings without exception have in them a mixture of potency that will little by little be developed; we may say that they are continuously *progressing* and that their existence is one perpetual passing from potency to act, and hence they are changeable and more or less imperfect, since to be in potency, as compared with being in act, is an imperfection. The divine Being, which is primal and therefore eternal,[1] was, is, and will ever be wholly in act, which is one with saying that it unfolds all the activity of which it is capable. In it nothing commences, nothing is passing, nothing increases, nothing diminishes, nothing changes; it is always and wholly what it is; it is always the sun giving forth its light, always and wholly and equally the center of attraction.

But this infinite Being, since it is in the highest degree spiritual, of its very nature must produce of itself its own substantial image; it must have its own thought, its own idea, its own Word, its own Son, and as St. Athanasius says, if it had

1 Everything in potency, in order to pass into act, must necessarily have an external force to develop it; the seed to become a plant requires sunshine, water, and air; human reason requires for its development the aid of the senses, of words and teaching, and so on. If in God there were a shadow of potency it could not pass into act except by the aid of another being. Then He would be imperfect, changeable; He would no longer be God, the primal Being, autonomous and most perfect.

not this, God would be without reason or knowledge of Himself, nor could He ever possess these, since to pass from the potency to the act of thinking He would need a power outside Himself to act upon Him. Now this thought, idea, Word, this Son, emanating from the very substance of God, who generates Him, is eternal as He is eternal, and is consubstantial with Him, and is distinguished from Him as the generated is distinguished from the generator. God, then, is always the Father, since He always generates His Thought, or Word, or Son, and the Son is always the Son, because He always emanates from the Father, who is, as the sun, always producing light.

The Father from all eternity generates the Word, His own perfect image, His eternal thought, in which He sees Himself, contemplates Himself and delights in Himself, and seeing this Word to be most perfect, because it is a true mirror of His own most perfect Being, His love overflows like an immense river, it comes forth in an impetuous torrent from the deepest recesses, from the unsearchable depths of His Being, and with this love He gives Himself wholly to His Son, and with equal, or rather, with the same love He is simultaneously loved by the Word, and thus loving they clasp one another in an everlasting embrace, and, I had almost said, melt into one

sole Being. This love, like Iris reflected from Iris, as the poet would say, a love infinite and eternal, as the Two are infinite and eternal, by whom it is breathed forth, is the third divine Person, the Holy Spirit, the substantial love of the Father and of the Son. And then is completed the two internal processions of the divine Being, which *is,* and *understands* and *loves,* and understanding and loving is beatific in itself and needs not go out of itself, since it possesses everything in itself. For what could it find outside itself?

Thus God, who is only one and can not be other than one, being infinite, is not solitary and isolated and condemned to live in an eternal and oppressive silence. He is one in Essence, but trine in Persons or Subsistences, and He tastes the ineffable joys of eternal fatherhood in a Son worthy of Himself; and the Father and the Son are everlastingly ravished in an ecstasy of eternal love equal to their own. In God, because of the trinity of Persons, there is neither silence nor solitude, nor the selfishness that murders love and happiness, but a holy society of three Persons, who know one another perfectly and, knowing one another perfectly, give themselves and give themselves again to one another by a most pure and eternal act, each living more in the others than in Himself, and all three living in

each, and pervading one another in such way that they are and will always be one sole and most simple Being.

The first Person is the Father and can not be the second or the Son, since the generating or the thinking must precede the generated or the thought; the second Person, the Son, can not be the third, or the Holy Ghost, because knowledge must go before love; but one Person is not greater than the other, since each has wholly and entirely the same Essence, and since, if the origin of the Son from the Father, and of the Holy Ghost from the Father and from the Son or through the Son, gives rise to a distinction, the eternal activity of that Being does not permit any interval of time between the existence of one Person and the existence of the other.

Let us repeat. The sun always produces its light, and the sun and the light always produce their heat, although the mind apprehends first the sun, then the light, and finally the heat. If one, soaring in thought above the things of earth and heaven, casts himself into that shoreless sea of the divine Being and seeks to fathom it with his mental eye, he will draw thence so much light that he will feel himself overcome by it; and then he will realize that he has reached a point beyond which it is not permitted him to go, and his knowl-

edge will be the most perfect it is possible to have here below.

But some one may object. By aid of the processions of thought and love, which take place in the human soul and in angelic spirits, you have in a way afforded us glimpses of the two processions of the divine Being. Well and good; but in men and angels we have not one sole thought, one sole mental word, one sole act of love, but a countless multitude of thoughts and of acts of the will, or of love. Why may not the same be true of God? Why may not He have more than one Son, and more than one Holy Spirit? The answer is simple; listen and you will agree with me.

The mind of men and of angels is a mixture of potency and of act; being finite it can not wholly unfold itself in an instant; its labor is progressive and extends into space and time; one act follows another, and so on, just as a man on a journey to arrive at the goal must go step by step and can not reach it in a single stride. The same is true of the will, which necessarily follows in the path of the mind. In men and angels, and in any creature whatever, we have a multiplicity of thoughts and mental words and of acts of the will; but in God it is not so. Since in Him all the activity of the mind and all the activity of the

will is always and wholly in act, a multiplicity of thoughts and mental words and of acts of the will is wholly impossible; all these acts are necessarily reduced to one sole and most simple act of the mind, generating one single thought or word, the equivalent of an infinite multiplicity, breathing forth one sole and only act of the will or of love, the Holy Ghost, embodying or containing in itself and most perfectly a multiplicity of acts. Many of course will find all this difficult to comprehend; let us try to get an idea of it by means of similitudes and analogies, which are always the great ladder by which to rise from the things of earth to the things of heaven and to the divine.

In the intelligences of men and angels there is a vast gradation, and what is said of the intelligence may be extended to the will, which is inseparable from the intelligence. Between the intelligence of a Socrates, a Plato, a St. Thomas, or a Leibnitz, and that of any moderately educated man, what a difference! Between the intelligence of the lowest of the angels and that of the highest seraphim, what an abyss! Propose to all these men the same problem, one difficult of solution, whether in mathematics or metaphysics, and while the man of fair education and moderate intelligence will not be able either to solve it at all or will solve it only after long thought and many trials, men of splendid intel-

lects will solve it either at once or in a few moments. The man of parts, and still more the man of genius, shortens the process; in an instant he sees the beginning, the middle, and the end; he passes over arguments and the involutions of long processes of reasoning and goes straight to the last conclusion; he reduces all to unity, restricts the multiple to one; to see the principle or the axiom and to see the ultimate conclusion contained in it, is to him all one and the same. The higher an intelligence is the more simple it is; the more acute it is the more rapid and compendious are its acts, and the more nearly it approaches to a synthesis and to unity. Who can doubt this truth? Now God, the absolute Being, in the eternal act, in which He exists, brings into operation His whole intelligence and His will, and the result of this is His Word, His own Son, who exhausts this operation and comprehends it, and the result of this again is the Holy Ghost, His infinite love, and therefore the Son is but one and the Holy Ghost is but one. They would be many if that first act of the divine intelligence and of the divine will were defective and left place for explanations or required to be again put into action. In God there can be only one Son, one Holy Spirit, because both are infinite, and each the perfect expression, the supreme and absolute unfolding or term of those two acts, each one and

sole, possible only in the divine Being—to understand and to will. Any one who can reason can not help seeing, dimly it may be, this most exalted of all truths of philosophy and theology.

But it will be objected again. True, in the world of living things may be seen faint vestiges of a trinity; in studying ourselves we find an acting soul, its word, and its love, or a principle and two internal processions. In contemplating the infinite Being we discover three substantial modes of existence and we can not help admitting these; still do those vestiges of the Trinity that are visible among living things, that image of the Trinity that is luminous in the world of spirits, that divine Being that manifests itself under three forms, do all these prove the Trinity as it is taught by the Church and proposed to us for our belief? Granted; we see three modes of being, but not three Persons, which is quite another matter.

All this is quite true, my friends. We set out from the phenomenon, undoubted and universal, of the fecundity manifest in all living things; we passed on to the world of intellect and we saw that fecundity, such as is possible to simple and spiritual beings, is a characteristic of the human soul and of every spirit. Is this a demonstration of the divine Trinity? It is an induction, beautiful and weighty, if you will, but it is not a defi-

nite demonstration. We are finite and our acts are also necessarily finite, and hence our trinity is not, and can not be, a personal trinity; they are three distinct modes of the same substance, three persons in outline. But were we infinite our three modes of being, the I thinking, its word or thought, and its love, would constitute three distinct and substantial persons. Bossuet used these beautiful words, which I quote now that I am bringing this Discourse to an end: "If I were as God, one in nature, incapable of any accident, one in whom everything would be necessarily *substantial,* my potency, my intelligence, and my love would also be something subsistent and substantial, and I should be three persons subsisting in one sole nature."

Still we have not demonstrated, nor have we explained the dogma of the divine Trinity, the highest of all Christian mysteries; we have only seen some traces, some likeness of it in living beings, and above all in rational nature, which approaches nearest to God and on which the Being one and trine has stamped its most visible footprint. Lifting our eyes up to God we have seen His Being face to face; we have searched the inaccessible depths of His inner life (where is the mortal eye that can bear the splendors of that light?); we have not seen the eternal Sun in Himself, but we have discovered here and there

through the clouds that veil Him some reflections of Him, enough to give us a right to say: The divine Trinity, as taught by the Catholic Church, is not opposed to human reason; in many respects it is consonant to it, but withal wholly transcending its powers. It is a mystery, but such a one that, should we reject it, others would spring up on all sides to torture our intelligence. It is a mystery, but so is the sun, which, though unseen, shines out behind the towering peaks of the Alps, gilding their summits, lighting up their eternal snows, making the clouds floating above them to gleam with purple and gold, and dissipating gigantic shadows; the phenomena produced by the invisible orb are strange and seemingly contrary to nature, yet who can deny their existence? Say the same of the Blessed Trinity; it is outlined in a thousand ways and in mysterious but certain lines upon all nature; if you refuse to read these lines aright, everything is in darkness and the universe becomes an insoluble riddle; if you read them aright, light is diffused everywhere and a stupendous harmony is manifest throughout the whole cycle of beings from inorganic matter onward and upward to living beings, to the soul of man, to pure spirits and to God.

Docile to the teaching of faith, which science tells us is unreasonable, let us bow our heads and

adore the mystery of the divine Life, saying: "O primal and eternal Being, who art because Thou art; from whom all things come and to whom all things return; who art sufficient for Thyself, who dost give without losing and dost receive without increasing; O Being, purely and wholly being, who dost from all eternity abide in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; who art wholly in each of them, yet without dividing Thyself; who art wholly in all and wholly in each, who art all being, all intelligence, and all love, one in three and three in one, without confusion and without separation, ever and solely blessed in Thyself, we believe in Thee and we adore Thee! To Thee be honor and glory now and always and throughout all the endless ages.[1] Amen."

[1] All these proofs from induction and analogy concerning the Blessed Trinity are taken from the Fathers, notably from St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, and St. Fulgentius; from great theologians such as St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas; and from the modern apologists, Ventura, Felix, Bogand, Monsabré, Gratry, Nicolas, and others.

The Holy Eucharist

DISCOURSE I

Errors and Truths Concerning the Dogma of the Eucharist

REVELATION is a series of divine truths made known to men from Adam on to Christ and the apostles, and with Christ and the apostles this revelation was completed and a seal put upon it. All these truths are revealed, and because revealed they must be believed; but all of them are not of equal excellence and importance. They are like a mountain chain, some of whose peaks rise to great heights—one above another, some to still greater heights, towering above all the others. In this series of divinely revealed truths there are three that unquestionably stand out above the others, that are, as it were, lofty centers about which the others are grouped; they are like the three angles of an immense pyramid, upon which the edifice of Christianity is based, giant-like and indestructible. The first and fundamental revealed truth is the existence of one God in three Persons, of one sole Being, manifesting itself in three equal and distinct forms, in such way that the supreme Unity is no detriment to the perfect Trinity, and the perfect Trin-

ity no detriment to the supreme Unity. This we have already seen.

The second fundamental truth is the Incarnation, by which a single Person, the Son, unites in Himself two natures, the divine and the human, in such wise that the single Person does not confound into one the two natures, nor do the two natures break in twain the one personality, so that Jesus Christ—true God and true man, is one sole individual.

The third fundamental truth is the Blessed Eucharist, through which the Man-God, in His glorified state, abides invisibly in the species of bread and wine and gives Himself as food and drink to believers. If through the Incarnation the Son of God unites Himself substantially and eternally to the body and soul assumed in the unity of His Person, through the Eucharist the Man-God unites Himself accidentally and temporarily to the species of bread and wine. The Blessed Trinity by a sole identical act produces outside itself that miracle of power, wisdom, and goodness, the Incarnation of the divine Word; and the divine Word made man produces that other miracle of power, wisdom, and goodness, the Blessed Eucharist. The Blessed Trinity centers in the Man-God, and the Man-God centers in the Eucharist, the one marvelously completing the other.

In the Incarnation the one Person of the Word takes to Himself and makes His own a human body and a human soul; in the Eucharist through the accidents of bread and wine He unites Himself to men one by one, draws them to Himself, unites them, making them live of His very life, thus completing the work for which He came on earth.

It is of this mystery of faith and love I am about to speak. As it is of supreme importance that from the very outset we should have precise notions of this ineffable mystery, we shall in this first Discourse inquire, first, what are the errors which ignorance and the perfidy of heretics have invented concerning the Blessed Eucharist; and, next, what are the dogmatic truths which are contained in this Godlike sacrament and which must be believed.

All who call themselves Christians and accept the Gospel, accept also the fact of the institution of the Eucharist, recorded by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and by the apostle Paul, who contrary to his custom and to the character of a Letter, took upon himself the task of an evangelist. But if all Christian Churches are unanimous in accepting the institution of the Eucharist, as narrated by the evangelists, all do not agree as to the sense in which it is to be understood, and hence it is well to know the errors

into which they have fallen, first, that they may be avoided, and, next, that being once well understood, the truth may be set forth more accurately defined, and therefore more easily grasped in all its integrity and beauty.

Are the bread and wine, which Christ at the Last Supper gave to His apostles, saying, "This is My body—This is My blood," figures and symbols of His body and blood, in the sense in which the paschal lamb and the serpent set up in the desert were figures and symbols? By no means, my friends. So thought and so still hold a large body of Protestants, who said and say that the Eucharistic bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ, of which they are only simple and naked symbols. Thus the Saviour in the full light of the Gospel, when the shadows of the Mosaic Law had flitted away and its symbols were no more, would have thrust us back into the same shadows and the same symbols, aye, into others less clear and less significant than those. For did not the paschal lamb and the manna represent Christ much better than do bread and wine? No, no; the bread and wine in the Blessed Eucharist are not, and can not be, signs and figures, and the Church smote with her anathemas this doctrine when it first appeared, hesitatingly indeed, in the eleventh century. It again appeared still more daringly and with all the parade of decep-

tive science in the sixteenth century, and the Council of Trent again dealt it a death-blow.

Do the bread and wine in the Blessed Eucharist contain, so to say, a certain mysterious substantive virtue, emanating from the body and blood of Christ, as heat and light emanate from the sun? Or may it be said that Christ is in the Blessed Eucharist only in so far as it contains His grace, as it is said that the sun is upon the earth because it warms it and illuminates it? No, my brethren. If this were so the Eucharist would differ little from the other sacraments and would not be the center of our faith, the sacrament of the body of Our Lord.

The Council of Trent smote both this and the preceding doctrine with the same condemnation and placed them both among the number of heresies.

May it be said that, as the glorified body of Christ entered into the Cenacle, the doors being closed, so also it enters into the bread and wine of the Blessed Eucharist and abides there, as does gold shut up in a casket, or as does the soul in the body, the two substances, the adorable body of Christ and the bread and wine, penetrating and pervading each other and co-existing together? Or may it be said that the Eucharist is a repetition of the mystery of the Incarnation, in which the divine nature unites itself to the hu-

man in one Person, the two natures, however, though intimately united, remaining distinct? And as that mystery was and is called the Incarnation, may we not call this *impanation,* or *subpanation,* or *consubstantiation?*

No, my friends; these are novel words and still more novel conceptions. The infallible definition of the Church also smote this unheard-of doctrine and extinguished it.

Christ, holding the bread in His hands, said: "This is My body"; and holding the chalice of wine in His hands, said: "This is My blood." May I then believe and affirm that in the Blessed Eucharist the body under the species of bread is separate from the blood, and the blood under the species of wine is separate from the body, as the words would seem to imply?

No, my friends; this is another error at variance both with reason and with faith, and which the Church has proscribed.

I see the bread on the altar; I see the wine in the chalice; over both the priest has pronounced the consecrating words. I believe that Jesus Christ is there present; there is no mistaking His words. The priest breaks the bread into two parts, into ten, into twenty; he divides the wine into a hundred drops, into a thousand, almost invisible to the eye. What has become of the body of Christ and of His blood? Are both the one

and the other divided into all these parts and drops, or do the body and the blood *each* remain *respectively* in one single part, in one single drop?

No, my friends; neither the one nor the other, and the Church in clear and distinct words condemns these dreams of human weakness.

I know that the bread may become corrupt and so also the wine. Do, then, the body and blood of Christ undergo a like change?

No, my friends; far from us be such fears and thoughts. The blessed body of the Saviour is immortal, glorious, and incorruptible.

Wherever I see the consecrated bread and wine, there is the body and there the blood of the Saviour; this the Church teaches me and the word of Christ is my warrant for it. May I, then, say that the body of Christ is immense, and that it is everywhere as God is everywhere?

No, my friends; the body of Christ is created, it is finite, and it is not God, nor can it transform itself into God; to say so would be the height of absurdity and an insult both to reason and to faith.

Is Christ only present in the Blessed Eucharist at the instant in which the faithful receive Him? And why should He really be present either before uniting Himself to the faithful or after?

No, my friends; the presence of Christ is not restricted to the moment in which the faithful re-

ceive Him, and should one hold this he would fall under the anathema which the Church sanctioned at Trent against Luther and his followers.

In the Eucharist I see only bread and wine; Christ is not perceptible to any of my senses; it is therefore unreasonable to adore these poor earthly semblances and he who does so in no wise differs from an idolater.

No, my friends; this is what our Protestant brethren affirm, but the Catholic Church assembled at Trent solemnly condemned their statement.

It seems neither becoming nor lawful to preserve the divine Eucharist in our churches and tabernacles, or to carry it to the sick.

No, my friends; against such as held this opinion, an opinion injurious to the infinite goodness of Christ and detrimental to the needs of poor human nature, there is again the irrefragable judgment of the Church, which condemned it.

My brethren, we have passed in review all the errors, or at least the leading errors, which in the course of ages the pride and weakness of human reason have invented and taught concerning the Blessed Eucharist, the august sacrament of faith and love. We have seen the rocks on which many of our brothers have run and were miserably shipwrecked; we have seen rise above those ill-fated rocks a column which, while time and man endure,

shall never be broken, and upon this column we have read words never to be effaced, in which the Church has recorded the lamentable shipwrecks that then took place. What, then, does it behoove us to do? It behooves us to steer clear of those awful rocks, to meditate on those memorable words and to keep them before our mental gaze, and doing so we shall confidently steer our boat into the tranquil harbor of truth.

And the first truth, opposed to the errors which, as we have just seen, the Church condemns, is this: In the bread and wine, which Christ blessed and consecrated, we have, not a simple type or a miserable figure of the body and blood of Christ, but the true and real body which was immolated for us and the true and real blood which was poured out for us on the cross. Shadows and figures belong to the old economy, truth to the new. Hence we profess with the Catholic Church that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is *truly* contained under the species of bread and wine.[1]

The second truth, which we hold to be of faith, the opposite of the error of many Protestants, and which marvelously reinforces the first truth, is this, that the Blessed Eucharist is not merely not a figure, nor simply an inspiration to have Christ in our thoughts, nor an incentive to unite

[1] Trid. Sess. xiii, c. 3.

ourselves to Him by faith and to commune with Him spiritually, but that Jesus Christ Himself is in the Blessed Eucharist in a way invisible indeed to us but truly and *really*.

The third truth, enunciated by the Council, pursues and drives the error of Protestantism from the last retreat in which it seeks to entrench itself, and sets forth and seals the dogma of the real presence in a way that makes all tergiversation impossible. It is this: Christ is *truly, really,* and *substantially* present in the Blessed Eucharist. Under the Eucharistic veil there is not a figure of the body and blood of Christ, not an appeal or a call to faith, not a force or an occult virtue, or a grace going out from the body and blood of Christ, as heat goes out from fire, but the substance itself, Christ's body and blood; there He is Himself as He was here on earth, as He is now in heaven with His entire and perfect human nature united to the divine; He is there *substantially.* This word is the complement of the other two; it transfixes error, it bars the way against every sophism and writes in letters of light the truth of the real presence, so that it stands out before us in all its fulness and evidence.[1]

The fourth truth has reference, not properly to

[1] The Council of Trent, Sess. xiii, c. i, condemns any one who says that in the Blessed Eucharist Christ is contained as in *a sign*, or *figure* or *virtually*, and to these words correspond the three above given, namely, *truly*, *really*, and *substantially*.

the real presence, but to the way in which it comes about. The omnipotent words of Christ do not put into the bread and wine His glorified humanity, nor do they make the two substances penetrate and pervade each other, but they effect what they express and mean; that which is bread becomes the body of Christ, and that which is wine becomes His blood. "This *is* My body. This *is* My blood." One substance passes into the other, so that of the substance of bread and wine there remains not a single atom; all is changed into the body and blood of Christ. Note well the words of Christ, who said, "This *is* My body. This *is* My blood." They refer to the substance only, not to the accidents or to the species, which remain intact, wholly deprived of their proper substance and sustained by divine power. This miraculous change of the substance alone, to which there is nothing similar in all nature, is called with perfect precision *transubstantiation,* or the passing of one substance into another.

The fifth truth enunciated by the Church is this: Christ is glorified, and as He is no longer subject to death, or to the separation of the soul from the body, so also His body can not be separated from His blood, and His body and blood can not be separated from the divine Person of the Word, which assumed them. Hence where the body of Christ is there also is His blood, and

where His body and blood are there is His soul, and where the soul together with the body and blood is there also necessarily is the adorable Person of the Word, or there is Christ whole and entire. It is indeed true that the transubstantiating words, taken by themselves, may imply the separation of the body from the blood, because they allude to the sacrifice and to the death, but the natural bond, that can not be severed, requires that where one part of Christ is, that is, either the body or the blood, there also all that naturally belongs to Christ must be. Is it not true, my friends, that, if you go forth bodily from this church out into the street or to your homes, your thoughts and your soul will also be wherever your bodies are, whether in the street or in your homes? So also is it with the body and blood of Christ. The words of consecration bring the body upon the altar and at the same instant, simultaneously with the body, Christ is there whole and entire; they bring the blood of Christ into the chalice, and at the same instant, simultaneously with the blood, Christ is also there whole and entire.

The sixth truth is this: Christ is whole and entire under the appearances of bread and wine, but how? He is there, not as a body laid away in a tomb, or as a being concealed by veils; He does not increase or diminish according to the size of

the species; they are not His limit or measure, for the species are not properly the form of the body and blood of Christ, but of the bread and the wine, which no longer exist. Christ is whole and entire under all those species and in each part of them, whether they are one whole or separate. Is not our soul whole and entire in the whole of our body and in every part of the body which it vivifies? This truth is incontrovertible.

You will say: It is easy to understand this with regard to the soul, whose nature is simple, indivisible, and spiritual, but how can the same be said of the body of Christ, which is a true body?

Yes, the body of Christ is a true body, but glorified and incorruptible; a body which St. Paul described by a bold word when he called it a *spiritual* body, inasmuch as it has characteristics or qualities which in a way make it like a spirit.

If the similitude of a soul, which is wholly in the entire body, does not seem apt, let us take another from the field of matter. You see your image in a mirror; there is only one mirror; break the mirror into ten, twenty, a hundred pieces, and in each of them you see the same image whole and complete.

The seventh truth is this: The substance of bread and wine naturally changes and corrupts in time, and by the same laws what happens to this happens also to the species of bread and

wine. These corrupt, but that which lies beneath them and is unalterable does not corrupt. Does the mind corrupt when the body decomposes? When the mirror is broken and smashed, is the image that it reflects also broken and smashed? It ceases to be in the mirror as the body and blood of Christ cease to be in the species.

The eighth truth is this: The most sacred body of Christ, while it can be and is *substantially* present, whenever the words of consecration are pronounced, does not and can not change its nature of a true, real body, finite and circumscribed by space, and hence we Catholics reject with horror the teaching of those Protestants, modern Eutychians, who daringly assert that wherever God is, there also is the body of Christ, as if the body of Christ could transform itself into the divine nature, which is of all imaginable absurdities the greatest.

The ninth truth is this: All the other sacraments are of their nature passing acts; the minister pronounces the divinely ordained words over the prepared matter and at the very instant, when the words of the minister are joined to the matter, grace, like a spark, is produced and pervades the soul of the properly disposed recipient. The sacrament is complete and ceases, leaving after it grace, and sometimes, as in Baptism, Confirmation, and Order, the sacramental character.

But in the Blessed Eucharist, when the words of consecration are pronounced and transubstantiation has taken place, the sacrament remains as long as the species remain, and with the species remains the real presence of Christ. The Author of all grace is there under the species, before the faithful receive Him and after they receive Him, until the species are wholly transformed; He is there present also when no one receives Him; He is there alone shut up in the tabernacle throughout the long hours of the day and the weary watches of the night; He is there while the priest bears Him in his hands to the lonely bedside of the sick who are struggling with death and making ready for the great journey into eternity.

The tenth truth is this: In the Blessed Eucharist we see only the appearances of bread and wine, but before these appearances we bow the head and bend the knee and adore the Man-God, Jesus Christ, because our adoration is centered, not in those appearances destitute of their proper substance, but goes on to Him who is hidden beneath them. As the apostles fell down and worshiped Christ, wherever He deigned to show Himself, because they adored in that man the divine Word concealed within, so do we, wherever we see the Eucharistic species, fall down and adore Him, the Man-God, who is veiled behind them. We do not adore a creature, or the bread and

wine, which no longer exist, but Him who created them, the Saviour of the world.

These, my friends, are the leading truths relating to the great mystery of the real presence, the opposite of the respective errors which God's enemy and ours has in the course of ages sown in the field of the Church and upon which the Church has set the seal of her condemnation. Let us as docile children of our loving mother, which on earth holds the place of God our Father, fly and detest the errors that she points out and abhors, and welcome and love the truths that she presents to us, and following her guidance we shall pursue the way that is luminous with a pure and perennial light from on high.

DISCOURSE II

The Real Presence, the Words of Scripture and the Words of Tradition

IN SPEAKING of the Blessed Eucharist we find ourselves in the presence of two sorts of enemies to whom we must necessarily give battle.

The first oppose us in the name of reason, and taking upon themselves the character of vindicators of its imprescriptible rights say to us in loud and angry tones: "The doctrine of the real presence of Christ violates every law of nature and is the most manifest insult that can be offered to human reason; we can not and we ought not admit it. If we are to believe in this doctrine we must cease to be men, abdicate our reason and offer to God, who gave us this reason, the greatest of outrages." So say rationalists, ancient and modern.

Others oppose us in the name of faith itself, and armed with Scripture and the authority of tradition say to us: "You understand neither the one nor the other; you make Christ and tradition say what they never taught; you wrongly interpret Holy Writ; you misunderstand the Fathers and the teaching of the primitive Church; the doctrine of the real presence is your

own; it was introduced at a later date and, this being so, should be utterly discarded."

To rationalists, past and present, we shall reply in the next Discourse with such arguments as the subject demands, and others can not be required of us, since there is question of a doctrine that transcends all the forces of nature and the powers of human reason.

We shall meet the adversaries who oppose us with the weapons of Sacred Scripture and venerable Christian antiquity with the same weapons and on equal conditions. They challenge us to enter the field of scriptural and patristic interpretation; we cheerfully accept the challenge, and of the result we shall leave our readers, nay our honest and fair-minded adversaries, to judge.

It is, however, a fact that those who profess to assail us only with the arms of Scripture, if their tactics are closely examined, are in reality allies of the rationalists and frequently, without admitting it, range themselves under their banner and fight with their weapons. But putting aside for the moment these secret alliances with rationalists, we accept the challenge in the field they designate.

They say: "The Sacred Books of the New Testament, rightly understood, do not prove the doctrine of the real presence." We say the direct contrary: "The Sacred Books of the New Testa-

ment, rightly understood, clearly prove the doctrine of the real presence." They say: "The Fathers and the primitive Church are with us." We say: "They are against you and with us." And now for the proof. The question is one of simple interpretation and by no means difficult.

Three of the evangelists, Matthew,[1] Mark,[2] and Luke[3] and the apostle Paul,[4] in narrating the story of the Last Supper of Our Lord, give the institution of the Blessed Eucharist in identically the same words: "This is My body. This is My blood." As to the authenticity of these words there does not exist, either among Catholics or among our Protestant brethren of all communions, the least shadow of a doubt, as to this all perfectly agree. This being taken for granted it would seem that the argument may be thus stated: If the words spoken by Our Lord over the bread that He held in His hand, "This is My body," and over the wine in the chalice, "This is My blood," are to be understood in their proper and natural sense to mean that the word *body* meant body, and the word *blood* meant blood, and nothing else, then it is clear that the real presence is put beyond all manner of doubt. So far, well. Now the most ordinary common-sense requires that words

[1] xxvi. 26, 28.
[2] xiv. 22, 24.
[3] xxii. 19, 20.
[4] 1 Cor. xi. 23 et seq.

shall be taken in their proper and natural meaning, whenever there is no manifest necessity for taking them in a figurative or metaphorical sense. Here Our Lord says that this bread is His body and that this wine is His blood; by what right, then, shall we change the words He utters, making Him say: "This bread is a figure of My body; this wine represents My blood. This bread contains the virtue of My body; this wine contains the efficacy of My blood."

If the words *body* and *blood,* used by Our Lord, are not to be taken literally to mean *body* and *blood,* why did not Christ say so, or why did He not in some indirect way leave us to understand this?

Why do the four inspired writers with singular unanimity repeat the words: "This is My body. This is My blood"? Why did not some one of them, to remove all doubt and danger of error, so natural in a matter so novel, so unheard of, and so far beyond what even the imagination could conceive, use some such words as these: "This bread is a figure of My body. This wine is an image of My blood"? It required so very little to make the truth clear.

And this was all the more natural, inasmuch as it is by no means rare for the evangelists to explain the sense of certain expressions less obscure and less weighty than these. St. John, after

giving the words spoken by Our Lord to the Hebrews: "Dissolve this temple," saw fit to add: "This He said of the temple of His body." And again, after giving the words: "Whoso thirsts let him come to Me and from his bosom shall flow rivers of water," goes on to explain them, saying: "This Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, whom believers would receive." Another evangelist, after quoting the words of Christ, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," makes their meaning clear by adding: "That is, hypocrisy." Why, then, did none of the four sacred writers think it worth while to make it clear by a single word, a single indirect hint, that the words *body* and *blood* uttered by Jesus Christ must be understood in an improper and figurative sense? Because this was not their sense and because they must be taken in their proper and literal sense, as meaning the true *body* and the true *blood* of Christ.

Moreover, we know from a study of the Gospel and of the Letters of St. Paul that there are very few truths and institutions of Christ that are recorded in the same words alike by the evangelists and by St. Paul, not even the dogma of the most blessed Trinity itself, nor Baptism, nor the primacy of Peter, nor confession, nor others almost, if not equally important. The words of institution of the Blessed Eucharist alone are given by

the three evangelists and by St. Paul without the change of a syllable, and the promise, because omitted by the others, is narrated at length by St. John. Why should there be such care and unanimity in recording it in the self-same words? Surely because of its supreme importance. Now I ask, if the Eucharist is only a symbol of the body and blood of Christ, a certain virtue of His, as it were, would it be so great an affair? Would it not be less than Baptism, less than Confirmation or the primacy of Peter? The Eucharist, then, is not, and can not be a poor figure of the body and blood of Christ, but it is in reality and in truth His real presence.

Moreover, it is to be noted that metaphorical and figurative language is not used in ordinary speech, nor should it be used, unless its meaning can be clearly understood, especially when speaking to the uneducated and to those who are slow to understand; and if it is used, it is but reasonable that it should be accurately explained, lest those to whom it is addressed be led into error. Now was it common among the Hebrews to use the word *bread* as meaning *body,* and the word *wine* as meaning *blood?* Most certainly it was not; no one took bread as a symbol of the body or wine as a symbol of blood. Jesus Christ, then, could not have used this wholly unknown metaphor; and much less could He have used it in

speaking to the apostles, who were so slow in apprehending the most common things that they confounded the leaven of doctrine with the leaven of bread and could not comprehend that it is not material food that sustains the soul, and hence merited the severe reproof that Jesus gave them. Could He have used it? He could, but on condition that He explained it, so that His hearers would understand that it was a figure and not a reality, and consequently He should have said, or made the evangelists say: "This is My body, that is, a figure of My body. This is My blood, that is, a figure of My blood." But He did not say this, nor did He make the evangelists says it. He gave no explanation, nor did they, and it is only reasonable that we should take His words as they are, and the word *body* must mean *body,* and the word *blood* must mean *blood.* It will be said that the evident impossibility of the thing forced the apostles to give figurative sense to the words of Christ.

It may be answered that the apostles knew that Christ was God; they had seen the marvels and the many wonderful prodigies wrought by Him; only a year before they had heard from His own mouth the promise that some day they would have His flesh as food and His blood as drink; they remembered the scandal which the promise, repeated with such asseveration, had excited, and

the protest of Peter, speaking in the name of all, that he believed His word; they knew that the death of the divine Master was nigh and they had heard Him say that this was His testament; how, then, could they help believing that this was the fulfilment of the promise He had given, the seal of His love, and therefore not a simple figure, in itself insignificant, but in truth His very body. This was surely possible to Him, who had changed water into wine and raised Lazarus from death to life, and hence they could and should have interpreted His language in the sense which it bore and which implied a stupendous miracle. If the Eucharist was but a figure of His body, it was not a miracle and was no more than a token of His love, of no special importance, far less important than many others they had already received.

Nor is the time and the hour in which Jesus uttered these words to be lost sight of.

It was at the last meal that Jesus ate with those He so loved; it was within a few moments of His passion; it was while He knew that His enemies were gathered together deliberating how and when they might get possession of Him, and while He was looking upon the traitor at His side, who had sold Him for a price. Little by little a cloud passed over His countenance and His soul was harrowed as with the anguish of death, which He did not conceal from those about Him. His heart

went out to them, as does the heart of an affectionate father about to take leave of his children, and from His lips fell words trustful, affectionate, and tender, the like of which even the apostles had never before heard Him utter, and which surprised and startled them. And can you fancy that in a moment like that, when His heart went out to them with feelings of inexpressible tenderness, Jesus could dream of leaving to all coming ages a token of His love in such words as these: "Bear in mind that in this bread I leave you a symbol of My body and in this wine a symbol of My blood"? Could an idea more strange, a device more inexplicable, or rather more absurd, be conceived? In that solemn moment could He use language so obscure? It was also at that solemn moment that the poor apostles, startled by His words, at once so clear and so full of love, cried out: "Now Thou speakest plainly," etc.[1] His language, then, was clear, precise, free from figures and metaphors. But how could it have been so, if the words of consecration, left without any sort of explanation and taken in a metaphorical sense, were an enigma? Nor is this all. It is an undoubted historical fact that the apostles, the first Christians, and the universal Church down to the sixteenth century,[2] understood the

[1] John xvi. 29.

[2] In the eleventh century Berengarius was likely the first to

words of Christ in their *proper* and *obvious* sense, and *relying upon these words* all believed firmly everywhere and always in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Is it possible that for so many centuries men, learned men and pious, and the apostles themselves, who heard the words as they fell from the lips of Christ, did not understand them and fell into the enormous error of believing Christ present in the Eucharist, when He was not present, and of adoring a morsel of bread and a few drops of wine in place of the Man-God? Is this the result for centuries upon centuries of the work of Christ?

And again, we Catholics and Protestants are all of one mind in professing that Jesus Christ is God-Man, and as God-Man, it is unnecessary to say, He knew all things. When, then, He was seated at table with His apostles at the Last Supper, and, handing them the bread and wine, said: "This is My body. This is My blood," He looked with His all-seeing gaze into their hearts and into the hearts of the millions and millions who were to believe in time to come, and what did He see? He saw all those believers, who loved Him with an intense love, who were ready to lay down their lives for Him, and many, very many of whom

take the words of Christ in a metaphorical sense. He was refuted and condemned and he retracted. From Berengarius to Zwinglius there was no one, as far as is known, who put that interpretation upon them.

would in fact lay down their lives for Him in the midst of the most excruciating torments, becoming the victims of a stupid error, of an incredible superstition, of an idolatry the like of which mankind had never before known, that, namely, of adoring bread and wine. He saw that the cause and the occasion of all this aberration were His own words, which they took literally; and He saw that, believing His power limitless and loving Him with an excessive love, they believed also that to Him this stupendous miracle was possible. He saw too that if He substituted for the one word "*is*," the word "*represents*," or "*is a figure of*," the colossal error would be corrected and the detestable superstition cease to be. How, then, can it be believed that seeing all this He would not have prevented it? How can it be conceived that He would not say the single word that would explain the truth and make belief in the incomprehensible mystery easy? As for myself I confess and avow that I can not conceive how Jesus, the amiable Master, ever ready to make the truth clear, to instruct the apostles, to remove all doubt even in matters of trifling importance, could by His silence permit so false and impious an interpretation to be put upon His words, and at a time, too, when He was making His last testament and was about to immolate Himself for their salvation. Is it possible or conceivable that He should

give His life for them on the cross and yet refuse to speak a word that would dissipate a stupendous error?

St. Luke and St. Paul add to these words of Christ: "This is My body. This is My blood," the following: "Which is given for you. Which shall be delivered for you. This is the chalice of My blood, which shall be shed for you." Now let us ask: Is it the bread that is given or delivered—is it the wine that is shed for the salvation of men, or is it the body and blood of Christ? There can be no doubt as to the answer. Hence the bread that was broken and given, the wine that was handed to the apostles, were truly the body and blood of Christ. If they were not His body and blood His words would have been senseless and sacrilegious.

In going through the Gospels we discover a fact that is worthy of being considered: In setting forth palmary truths and in founding great institutions Our Lord, before definitely proclaiming and establishing them, invariably spoke of them not once but often. Thus it was with Baptism, with the foundation of the Church, with the institution of the primacy of Peter, with the mission of the apostles and with His own passion, death, and resurrection, all of which He clearly announced, predicted, and promised time and again to the apostles in order to educate their minds up

to believing them and to prepare them for the severe trials that awaited them.

Now I do not hesitate to affirm that there is not a single truth, a single institution, so clearly, forcibly, and, I will add, bluntly announced, foretold, and promised by Christ as that of the Eucharist. And can we believe that the Eucharist, so solemnly announced and promised by Christ, is but a symbol, a figure, something easily understood, something destitute of all mystery and of no real importance? I leave you to judge.

And now let us go on to the promise of the Eucharist, given a full year before the institution and recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. The evangelist relates the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves, wrought the day before the promise, a miracle which Jesus Christ evidently worked for the purpose of getting an opening to speak of the Eucharist and of gaining belief in a miracle beyond all comparison still greater, namely, that of the real presence.

Let us follow the discourse of Christ. After insisting on the necessity of faith and of being nourished with bread other and better than that of the manna of the desert, a bread that gives life, He goes on to say openly what manner of bread this is: "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." Jesus speaks of a

bread that He will give; therefore this bread is not faith, which was required then and not at some future time. What bread was this? He Himself tells us in explicit terms: "The bread that I will give is My flesh." Did this flesh mean grace? No, for you may search the Sacred Books through and through and you will not find that Jesus Christ anywhere calls His *flesh* His grace. Such language had never been used, and it could not have been understood, because it was most obscure and was not explained by Him.

And so true is it that this word *flesh* uttered by Our Lord seemed strange and novel to all who heard it, including the apostles, that they began to murmur, saying one to another: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" They were, therefore, fully convinced that Jesus spoke of His *flesh,* which must be eaten to have eternal life, and not of bread as a figure of something else, or of any other spiritual food.

Jesus knew that His hearers were contending over the meaning of His words and notably over the word *flesh,* which *flesh,* He said, must be eaten. Now what does any teacher worthy of the name do when he perceives that the sense of his words has been mistaken or but imperfectly understood? He hastens to make their sense clear, and if he does not he fails in his duty, justly incurs the blame of honest men, and the error of

his disciples is imputed to him. Jesus was of all teachers the best; His language was always incomparably simple, and whenever His disciples did not comprehend His meaning He at once proceeded to make it clear, using terms and images familiar to all. Of this the Gospel is a proof.

What should He have done, then, when He heard them murmur: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" They evidently understood Him as speaking not of faith, nor of grace, nor of bread as a figure, but precisely of His own flesh, and, as a good kind Master, sympathizing with them in their ignorance, He should at once have corrected their error, saying: "You mistake; I am not speaking of My flesh, as something you must eat; no, I am speaking of the faith you ought to have in Me and which ought to be your food; I am speaking of the bread, which some day I will give you, and which you will take as a figure of My body." Had He done so all difficulties would have disappeared from the minds of His hearers. Did He speak thus? Listen.

Assuming an attitude of authority that precluded any reply, He said: "Amen, amen I say to you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you." How is this, O divine Master? Thy hearers and disciples, unable to understand how it is possible for Thee to give them Thy flesh to

eat, ask for an explanation and Thou dost add still another difficulty, saying that they must also drink Thy blood! Dost Thou not know that the Mosaic Law, of which they are jealous observers, forbids under severe penalties the drinking of blood under any form whatever? If Thy hearers and disciples do not understand Thy words, kindly explain them to them; if by the words *flesh* and *blood* Thou meanest a figure of some virtue of Thy flesh and blood, or some grace, or faith, or whatever else Thou willest, do not torment them or confuse their limited intelligence, but speak to them and speak more clearly—a single word will be sufficient.

But He did nothing of the sort; He went on reaffirming the same truth. After saying most solemnly, as if confirming what He said with an oath: "Amen, amen I say to you," He goes on: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day." These words, which are a repetition of those given above, would seem to be amply sufficient, but not so did Jesus think. He goes on: "For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed." These words, too, are a repetition and also an explanation of the preceding. A repetition, because they contain again the words *flesh* and *blood;* an explanation, because it is said that His flesh is meant to be food and His blood

meant to be drink, and only those who eat this flesh and drink this blood are united to Him and abide in Him. Could He possibly express Himself more clearly or more emphatically? Jesus repeats the words "*to eat*" six times, the word "*flesh*" five times, the word "*drink*" four times, and the word "*blood*" also four times, and not even once the word "*figure*" or "*sign*" or "*virtue,*" or any other equivalent word, which would lead us even vaguely to suspect that He did not mean really and truly the *body* and *blood* of the Son of God. It is therefore not only reasonable, but necessary, to take the words of Christ in their literal and natural sense, for this and no other was the will of Christ. Therefore in the Blessed Eucharist are present, really and truly and substantially, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. He Himself said so, and what He said must be true.

Nor can we pass over another argument which brings out still more clearly the sense of the words of Christ which you have just heard.

St. John, contrary to his custom, enlarges upon this fact.[1] He tells us that many of the disciples, hearing the words of Jesus, said: "This is a hard saying and who can hear it?" And why is it a

[1] It is well known that St. John in his Gospel is more intent on giving the words and the teachings of Christ than His miracles, of which he records very few. And still he speaks at great length of the present one, of what preceded it and of what followed it.

hard saying? Unquestionably because they can not comprehend how Jesus can give His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. It would not have been a hard saying if that bread and wine had been but figures of the body and blood of Christ or had only contained some mysterious virtue of the body and blood. Hence the disciples of Christ understood these words as we now understand them. Let us suppose that this was not the true sense of His words; was it not, then, the duty of Christ to make their sense clear? What does He do? Hearing the whisperings of His disciples He says in accents more emphatic than usual in speaking to them: "Doth this scandalize you? Can you not believe it? If, then, you shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before, this will be still more difficult to comprehend and yet you must believe it." These words did not subdue some of the disciples, and turning their backs upon Him they walked no more with Him. Did Jesus, on seeing this, change His language? Did He soften the expressions He had used? Did He say: "Bear in mind. I speak of faith, of a figure of My body and blood. What difficulty do you find in the paschal lamb in which you have already a figure of Me?" He said nothing of the sort, but turning and looking sternly at the twelve apostles gathered about Him He said in a voice vibrating with feeling: "Will you also go away?" As

much as to say: "If you will not believe what I have said, go; I will not change a syllable." They remained, and Peter, speaking in the name of all, uttered this most noble protest: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

And now, my brethren, a final observation which seems to me one of great weight. As we have seen, a division among the disciples took place when Christ had finished speaking. Those who believed in His words, those, namely, who believed that in order to have eternal life they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, remained faithful to Him; those who could not or would not admit so great a miracle, and who certainly would have had no difficulty in remaining with Him had there been question only of a simple figure of His body and blood, forsook Him. Now had Christ by His words not established the real presence of His body, but only a figure of it, or a virtue, what would have been the consequence? This and no other; Christ would have kept with Him and retained as His loyal disciples those who had not comprehended His words and who had fallen into a monstrous error; and He would have allowed those to depart from Him who had comprehended His language and had left Him because they would not admit a stupid error, which the Master Himself condemned. Can we accept an hypothesis so

absurd and impious? And yet, if we accept the Protestant interpretation, the consequence is inevitable; namely that they who erred remained with Christ, and they who rejected the error deserted Him, and Christ not only permitted, but approved so manifest a contradiction.

As I said above, St. Paul, in speaking of the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, seemingly forgetting that he was writing a Letter, becomes an Evangelist and gives the narrative at length in the very words of his disciple St. Luke. After narrating the fact of the institution, as the scope of his Letter required, he takes leave of the evangelists and making a moral application of the truth says: "Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." Now he alone is guilty of outraging majesty, who directly offends the person of a prince, and not he who insults his image; in the Blessed Eucharist is contained not a figure or a virtue of Christ but His very Person. Moreover, Protestants condemn the worship of images as a return to idolatry; how can they, then, recognize in the Eucharist a figure of the body of Christ, and a figure such that, if an insult is offered to it, the insult is offered to Christ Himself? The Apostle bids those who eat the Eucharistic bread and drink the Eucharistic wine prove themselves before do-

ing so, that is to examine their conscience, and if they are guilty of sin either to abstain from the Eucharist or to cleanse themselves. Now, if the Eucharist were but a figure of the body of Christ, would it be necessary before partaking of it to examine the conscience and to purify oneself by contrition? When was it ever said that one in sin might not meditate upon Christ crucified, or that one in sin by so doing was guilty of a sacrilege? And yet St. Paul teaches that whosoever receives the Eucharist in sin eats and drinks judgment to himself. And why? Because, replies the Apostle, *"he does not discern the body of the Lord. Non dijudicans corpus Domini."* There is, then, bread and bread, common bread and the Eucharistic bread, which is *the body of the Lord.* Such is the proof that this bread is not, and can not be, a simple figure, but in very truth the body of Christ.

My brethren, I fear that this long Biblical demonstration of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist may have wearied and tired you. But how could I have passed it over? Could I have disregarded the Protestant interpretation of this palmary article of our faith? I should have been culpable in doing so and I should by implication have confessed my inability to meet the opponents of the real presence, who come before us with the Sacred Books in their hands

and claim that they alone have the key to them.

Still the demonstration drawn from the words of Holy Writ, though peremptory, would be incomplete if not strengthened by the authority of the teaching Church, for she is the counterpart of Holy Writ and its infallible interpreter. Revealed truth is like a seed; it is deposited in the Sacred Books and it grows in the Church like a luxuriant tree and gains strength and vigor. I regret, my brethren, to be obliged to explain to you the faith of the Catholic Church during the first centuries in the dogma of the real presence, a faith that manifests itself in a thousand various forms. I say I regret it, because I force you to listen to truths you already know, and to hear them repeated may be a trial to you. But this is necessary if I would be orderly, and I shall strive, by being as brief as may be and by grouping under a few heads all the teaching of venerable Christian antiquity concerning the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, not to overtax your patience.

Let us go through the hundreds of volumes of the Fathers of the Church during eleven long centuries from St. Ignatius Martyr to St. Bernard, in which they record the treasures of faith which the apostles gathered, as they fell from the lips of Christ Himself; let us go through all the liturgical books, the origin of some of which goes back

to the very cradle of Christianity, books of all rites, of all Churches of both East and West, even of those separated from us, and of all tongues; let us interrogate all the memorials of Christian antiquity, written on monuments of stone, on glass, on bronze, on silver and gold; memorials found in churches, in sepulchres, and upon the walls of the Catacombs; memorials painted on wood and wrought into sacred vestments; in a word, let us interrogate all Christian antiquity in every corner of the globe, which, while professing its faith in a thousand tongues, will bear witness that the unanimous and most firm belief everywhere and at all times has been that the Man-God, the Son of God and of the virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, is contained in the Eucharist.

I hear the great voice of the Fathers saluting the sacrament of the Eucharist as the sacrament of *union with God,* of our *communication with Him;* as *the Sacrament of sacraments, the holy mystery, the terrible mystery, the tremendous mystery, the adorable mystery, the mystery of love and faith;* as *the source of life,* as *the supreme test of divine charity,* as *the sacrament in which Jesus Christ touches the depths of the infinite wealth of His goodness.*

Make the Eucharist only a figure or I know not what communication of a virtue proper to the body

of Jesus Christ, and this language of the Fathers is senseless, it is an intolerable exaggeration; admit the real presence and it becomes at once a vigorous and fitting expression of the truth.

I hear the great voice of the Fathers warning us against trusting to the senses in this sacrament, because their witness is deceptive, bidding us listen to faith and to faith alone, which will supply where sight and touch and taste fail, which is everything; and telling us that here we must fix our minds on the words of Christ. Why is it that the Fathers use this language only in speaking of the Eucharist and always preferably of the Eucharist alone? Because the Eucharist is the culmination of all Christian mysteries; because it stands out above and beyond all the other sacraments, inasmuch as these only contain and confer the grace of Christ, while the Eucharist contains Christ Himself. You may search as long as you will and you will find no other reason why it is more excellent than Baptism, the gateway to the Church, or than Order itself, which is a participation of the sovereign priesthood of Christ.

I hear the great voice of the Fathers assuring me that we, who live so many centuries after Christ, are contemporaneous with Him as they were contemporaneous who possessed Him, and that we see Him and touch Him as they saw Him and touched Him. Why has no Father used ex-

pressions such as these in speaking of the other sacraments? I leave the answer to you.

I hear the great voice of the Fathers saying to me that in the Eucharist the bread is changed, converted, transformed into the body of Christ, and the wine into His blood. Nor is this all; they tell me that as the slime of the earth by the divine power was changed into the body of Adam and the water at the marriage of Cana was made wine, that as the food we take becomes our flesh and blood, so are the bread and wine on the altar by the words of the priest changed into the body and blood of Christ. Is it possible to understand these words, so often repeated and insisted on by the Fathers, if the real presence and transubstantiation is rejected?

I hear the great voice of the Fathers proclaiming that the Eucharist is the work of the divine omnipotence, that He alone could produce it who spoke and all things were made. If we see in it only a memorial, a figure of Christ, where is the need of His omnipotence? Which of us could not make a symbol and leave it after us as a memorial to remind others of our existence or of some of our works?

I hear the great voice of the Fathers teaching in terms the most clear and emphatic that in the Blessed Eucharist the whole Christ, as He was on earth and is now in heaven, is *truly, really,*

properly, and *certainly* present, not in *figure,* or in *appearance,* or in *shadow* but in His true *body* and *blood;* that in the Eucharist He is united to us and we to Him; that His blood mingles with our blood; that it purples our lips and tongue; that our body is nourished by His; that Jesus is there on the altar as He was on the cross; that the altar becomes a heaven; that the priest holds Him in his hands as the Blessed Virgin held Him in her arms; that angels surround the altar adoring their king; that in this sacrament Jesus does what many mothers do not do for their babes, for they give their babes out to strange women to be suckled, and He feeds us with His own flesh and gives us of His own blood to drink.

I hear the great voice of the Fathers teaching us that Jesus has hidden His body under the Eucharistic veils in order that we may have an occasion to exercise our faith, to approach Him more confidently, and to be able to receive Him within us. Were He not hidden under the species of bread and wine how could we draw near to Him, or bear the flashing light of His presence, or give Him a lodging in our breasts?

I hear the great voice of the Fathers asserting without hesitation that the words of Christ: "This is My body—this is My blood," are clear and manifest and *indubitable;* that they need no explanation; that they must be taken as they sound,

because He is omnipotent, because He has spoken and that suffices; that we must beware of probing so great a mystery; that here reason is silent and the senses dumb; that if we will not go astray we must allow faith to rule in their stead. Wonderful indeed. I read the Fathers and I find them giving me this warning: "Take heed; if the Sacred Books teach that God repents, that God grows indignant, that God walks, that God has eyes and ears, that God hates, you must not believe that He really repents, or is indignant, or walks, or has eyes or ears, or hates; nothing of this nature can be in God, who is infinite perfection." The Sacred Books speak thus because they can not speak otherwise to man, a creature of sense. Why have not these same Fathers, in speaking of the Eucharist and commenting upon the words of Christ: "This is My body—this is My blood," been at pains to give me some such warning as this: "Bear well in mind that the body of Christ, mentioned here, is not His true body, and the blood is not His true blood; the bread and wine which you see are figures both of His body and of His blood." And here an explanation is more necessary than in speaking of God, since every one knows without being told that these imperfections can not exist in God, His nature being most simple and most perfect; whereas in the Eucharist there is question of a body, under cor-

poreal species, and this metaphor of bread and wine, signifying the body and blood of Christ, was never heard on earth before and if not explained was necessarily confusing to all minds.

Finally I hear the great voice of the Fathers bidding all believers bend the knee and bow the head before the Blessed Eucharist and to adore it whether in church or on the highway, in public or in private, in the hands of priest, bishop or Pope, aye even in the hands of a layman, it matters not; everywhere it is to be adored. And why? Because in the Blessed Eucharist is the Son of God, Jesus Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity.

And the voice of the Fathers and of the Church, filling all space and time, is echoed by Churches torn from her by schism and heresy—by the Anglican and the Lutheran, by the Russian and the Photian, by the Armenian, the Nestorian, and the Eutychian. How marvelous, my brethren, is this unanimity. And have all these, pastors and peoples, teachers and pupils, fallen into error? aye, into the most shameless idolatry? Were such the case I should have every right to turn to Christ and say to Him: "O Son of God, O Word incarnate! Thou didst come upon earth to found a kingdom, to set up a Church, to take to Thee a spouse without spot or blemish; for her Thou didst pour out Thy blood; Thou didst pour out into her

bosom the wealth of Thy grace; Thou didst proclaim her an infallible Teacher and Thou didst declare Thy own the children begotten of her. Where is this Thy Church now? Where is Thy spouse, this continuator of Thy work, the savior of the human race? Where is this lamp, never to be extinguished, which Thou didst light and set upon a mountain to illuminate the paths of life? It has gone out; it was but is no more; Thy spouse is faithless; Thy work is destroyed, the fruit of Thy blood is lost, Thy kingdom is overturned, Thy Church, against which Thou didst say the gates of hell should never prevail, horror of horrors, is fallen into the most abject idolatry. Behold her there with her head bathed in the dust, adoring a bit of bread and a few drops of wine. And Thou couldst permit this, Thou, who by a single word couldst have prevented such an infamy?" Ah, my brethren, why should I go on. This is not and can not be; if it were Christ would have failed of His promises.

Let us then, my brethren, fall upon our knees and with eyes fixed on the Sacred Host sing the song of the Angel of the Schools: "I devoutly adore Thee, O hidden God, who art veiled under these figures; my heart submits itself wholly to Thee, because in thinking of Thee it feels its utter nothingness. Sight and touch and taste are here wholly at fault; the only safety is in trusting en-

tirely to Thy word. I believe whatever the Son of God has said; there is nothing so true as His word of truth. On the cross only the divinity was hidden; here the humanity also is concealed. I believe, O Lord, help my weakness. Amen."

DISCOURSE III

The Mystery of the Eucharist Versus Human Reason

As I told you in the preceding Discourse, the enemies of the mystery of the Eucharist, as proposed by the Catholic Church for our belief, are divided into two classes. The first class embrace those Protestants who belong to the two sects of Calvin and Zwinglius and who, while differing slightly [1] from one another, agree perfectly in affirming that Jesus Christ is not contained *truly, really,* and *substantially* in the Eucharist, but only a figure of Him or a sort of efficacy of His body. This class opposes us with the weapons of the Bible and at times they do not disdain to appeal to the testimony of the Fathers of the Church. I think I can safely say that in the preceding Discourse I completely routed this class of enemies; the demonstration that I gave, drawn from the words of Holy Writ and confirmed by the great voice of universal and unbroken tradition, is simply unanswerable. The Bible is there-

[1] The disciples of Zwinglius, known also as Sacramentarians, hold that in the Blessed Eucharist there is only a figure of the body and blood of Christ; the disciples of Calvin hold that there is something more than a figure, namely, a certain virtue or efficacy that goes out from the body of Christ, but not the body of Christ itself.

fore our ally and the first class of enemies have to pull down their flag and admit that they are vanquished.

The second class of enemies, who in our day have increased enormously in numbers and insolence, remain to be answered. They care nothing for the old weapons taken from the vast arsenals of theology; they laugh at the Bible and the Fathers of the Church; they seize upon weapons old and new supplied by reason; they appeal to the laws of nature and boldly assert that the Catholic doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is manifestly antagonistic to the most certain and incontrovertible principles of human reason and science; that as to this dogma a choice must be made between reason and faith; that those who take reason as their guide must necessarily repudiate faith; and that it is labor thrown away to try to harmonize the two, since what is absurd can never be reconciled with sane reason.

My purpose in this Discourse is to place the dogma of the Eucharist face to face with reason; we shall hear and examine the claims of reason, and I am confident, nay certain, that we shall not find these such as to be a menace to the edifice of our faith; and I am also confident that when they are calmly discussed and weighed in the light of reason they will fall one by one like blunted weapons, *telum sine ictu,* and that our

dogma, like a diamond unbroken under the severest blows, will remain intact and shine with a new luster.

The discussion upon which I am entering is, as you know, one of the most difficult to treat, because it is intimately bound up with the most formidable problems of physics, metaphysics, and theology, in which hypotheses more or less reasonable are interwoven and alternate with axioms and dogmas. Let us, then, proceed orderly and without preconceived prejudices.

We believe that in the species of bread and wine there is *truly, really,* and *substantially* the entire Jesus Christ, the Man-God. And why do we believe this? Because Jesus Christ Himself has clearly affirmed it; because we know that He can neither be deceived nor deceive and that He is omnipotent. He is infinite wisdom and knows an infinity of things that I do not know, that I shall never know, and that I shall never be able to know; He is infinite power, and this power being at the bidding of His wisdom, He can do what transcends all the limits before which the impotent force of all the most highly gifted creatures combined must halt.

Now I ask, do we, who comprehend neither the wisdom nor the power of Jesus Christ, the Man-God, comprehend at least the nature of matter, its forces, the relations between its accidents and

substance, the composition of its parts, the secret of its transformations, of its affinities and repulsions, and so on? We know many things certainly, with regard to others we are limited to hypotheses; others again, that we are ignorant of, we shall know later on, and still others we shall never know. Not a year passes, and at times not a month, that the joyful cry of the learned, announcing some new discovery, is not borne in upon our ears. Only lately the learned were rejoicing because a new secret had been wrested from nature, the secret of passing rays of light through opaque bodies, of drawing them forth from their obscurity and of allowing us to examine them with our eyes. But what is the result? Every discovery that is made is a flash of light that illumines regions before shrouded in darkness and simultaneously reveals others, still more distant, buried in dense clouds and impenetrable to the eye; every discovery is a conquest in the kingdom of the unknown, but it only drives still further away and enlarges the confines of the mysterious, just as a shadow grows with the growth of the body that casts it.

Now, my brethren, finding ourselves in the presence of three great things that we do not comprehend, in the presence of three great mysteries, the mystery of the wisdom of Christ, the mystery of the power of Christ, and the mystery of nature

and its forces, we should be not only daring but rash, and not only rash but mad, if we affirmed with certainty that a certain fact is beyond the wisdom and the power of Christ; that it is not only antagonistic to the laws of nature, but intrinsically impossible. If I were in the middle of a very wide river could I say: "No engineer can throw a bridge across this river, because the shores would not support it"? I should first know the character of the soil of the shores. Now do I, a paltry man, know anything of the infinite? Assuredly not. Do I know every detail of the shores of the infinite? Have I carefully and surely explored them all? I am forced to confess that my knowledge is very imperfect. Reason then, after looking up toward God and toward the Man-God and out upon nature, its laws, its forces and its mysteries, conscious of what it is, ought to realize its own imbecility, and go slowly and cautiously before venturing to say: "This fact I can not comprehend; I can not do it myself, no man can do it; nay more, neither can God do it, for here nature throws up its barriers and says to God Himself: 'Thus far and no further.'" Reason will be wise if it will be modest and if it will limit itself to saying: "I can not comprehend this; I can not do it myself; all mankind combined can not do it"; but I shall not lightly venture to say: "Neither can God do

this," lest I should be compared to the child who said: "I can not climb that snow-capped peak of the Alps," and the next morning saw his father scale it.

We Catholics believe and profess the dogma of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist and we ought to be able to defend it against all enemies who assail it with the weapons of science; but we should not go beyond our strict duty; we are not called upon to do more than defend the dogma. Should we claim to be able to explain the dogma, to show *how* Christ exists in the Eucharist, we should attempt the impossible. It is enough for us to show that there is not a single argument drawn from reason that can clearly demonstrate that the dogma we believe is impossible. We are intrenched in the dogma as on a high fortress; we are girt about with the triple wall of the wisdom of God, of His infinite power, and of our limited intelligence, which can not comprehend the laws of created nature and its innumerable forces. As long as the enemy does not succeed in breaking down this triple wall, so long are we the victors and he the vanquished; because for us not to be conquered is to conquer. The enemy must show that our dogma is absurd and impossible; for us it is sufficient to show that it is not absurd, that it is not impossible, not indeed to man or to all mankind

together, but to God; and this we boldly affirm that we can do, and it is our duty to do it.

If I mistake not, my brethren, all the assaults of unbelief on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist may be reduced to three.

1. The unbeliever says: "You Catholics believe that in the Eucharist the whole substance of the bread and of the wine is instantaneously changed into the whole substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; you believe in instantaneous transubstantiation; this is impossible."

2. The unbeliever says again: "You Catholics believe that the body of Christ, which is a single body and circumscribed, is at the same time in thousands and thousands of places, different and remote one from the other, that it has neither weight nor measure, and that it is invisible and impassible. This is utterly impossible."

3. The unbeliever says again: "You Catholics believe that the species of the bread and of the wine are separated from the substance of bread and of wine, which no longer exists; that the species remain suspended and can produce all the effects that are proper to the substance of bread and wine, just as if they were themselves the substances of bread and wine. This is not only incomprehensible, it is contradictory and utterly impossible."

Now if we can repel these assaults we shall

remain masters of our fortress and we shall have a right to shout a song of victory.

The enemy advances to the first assault saying: "In the Eucharist we have a substance, which in an instant is wholly changed into another substance, namely, into the body and blood of Christ. This is a miracle, and a miracle is impossible and absurd."

That it is a miracle and a most stupendous one, who can deny? But can not the omnipotent God, the Creator of nature and of nature's laws, work a miracle? No one but an atheist will deny a miracle. Will you gentlemen prove, if you can, that this passing of one substance into another is impossible and absurd?

In the meantime let us look out upon the world that surrounds us and examine what is incessantly going on under our eyes. Whence comes the grass that clothes the meadows, the whitening grain, the oak and the ash, the forests of pine and larch that lift their branches on high? They were once but a seed, a small grain, hundreds and thousands of which might be held in the hollow of the hand. How did all this vegetation come forth from these small seeds, how did they grow and increase and become grass, and grain, and giant trees, able without breaking to bear up against the fury of the storm? These seeds, these small grains opened and unfolded; they sent forth

roots and sunk them deep into the earth; they burst into flower and leaf and little by little they waxed strong. Their roots drank in the sap from the earth; their leaves drank in light and air and moisture and the elements that air and water contain, and these elements so marvelously and toilsomely attracted, ceased to be what they were and were changed into wood and bark, into flowers and fruit, into leaves and into that stupendous mantle of green that covers and adorns the earth. My friends, what is all this? It is the passing of substances into other substances; let us say the word, it is a perennial transubstantiation.

Let us go up a step higher. Above the vegetable kingdom is the animal. The waters are full of living things and so also is the atmosphere; they cover the face of the earth and its interior swarms with them; the families of animals and their many species are counted by hundreds of millions and they grow in number as they decrease in size. First they were but an egg, an embryo, scarcely visible to the eye aided by the microscope. How did these living things grow and increase, how did some of them become giants upon the earth and monsters of the deep? By taking to themselves food from the vegetable and animal kingdoms and from the various elements scattered throughout all nature; and thus substances the most diverse entered into their stomachs, fused with their

blood, were transformed, and, to repeat again the great word, were *transubstantiated* and became the substance of their bodies. Is not this true? I leave you to answer.

My brethren, consider yourselves for a moment. Whence came the flesh and bones, the veins and blood, the nerves and arteries, and all the members that go to make up your bodies? What were they once? Who does not know? They were the food and drink, so various and different, which you ate and drank and with which you were nourished. You transubstantiated them into your bodies, and this process is going on day by day, aye, every moment and will cease only with death.

Shall I venture a still bolder assertion? Yes, for it is worth hearing. Which of us can count the sensations that we receive in our body? They are continuous and beyond count. Now these sensations, which we receive through the body and which are therefore corporeal, are seized upon by the soul, transformed, and, leaving behind them that which is corporeal, enter into the mind and there become in a sense simple and spiritual. We compare them one with another, we reason about them and by abstraction take them from the concrete and form of them ideas purely spiritual. Is not this the most wonderful of all transformations?

You see, then, that all substances beneath us,

outside us, within us, in the mineral and vegetable kingdom, are transformed, changed one into another, and that something similar, as we shall see more clearly further on, takes place in the spiritual kingdom. Where, then, is the difficulty of admitting the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ? Is not this adumbrated, imperfectly indeed, in the whole created universe?

I see a difficulty that comes up to your minds. The transubstantiation, you say, of which we have been speaking is accomplished slowly and by regular process, but in the Eucharist it takes place in a flash. In the transubstantiations of which we have any knowledge, with the change of substance the forms and species also change and we can see and touch them, whereas in the Eucharist only the substance changes and all the species of the original substance remain. In the transubstantiations of nature the original substance is not replaced by a new and wholly extraneous substance; whereas in the Eucharist under the original species is placed a substance wholly new and wholly extraneous, namely the sacred humanity of Christ.

What you say is very true. I have brought to your attention the transubstantiations that take place in nature as an image or similitude to aid you in forming a notion of the Eucharistic transubstantiation; they of course are not the same,

they are analogous. If these are effected by the laws of nature, why can not that be effected by the omnipotence of God? If these are effected slowly, why can not God, who does all things rapidly, effect that in an instant? Can not man by artificial means hasten transformations in nature? Can not I by artificial means obtain ripe fruit in April, which by natural process would not be supplied me until August or September? And if in these the forms change together with the substance, can not God so contrive that in the Eucharist the substance will change and the species remain? Who will dare deny that this is possible to God? We do not understand *how* this is brought about; but because we do not understand it that is no reason for saying that God does not understand it and can not do it. Let human reason reflect for a moment and ask itself: "Am I equal to God? Do I not know that He can do what I can neither do nor understand? He has created the universe. Do I understand how He did it? Or can I create one?" Let us, then, trust to His word and believe.

The enemy advances to the second assault, saying: "In the Blessed Eucharist we have the whole Christ, body, soul, and divinity; we have in it the body, which is a single body, and yet is at the same time in places without number, each remote

from the other, and is also without weight or measure, invisible and impassible. If all this," says the unbeliever, "is not absurd and absolutely impossible, then there is nothing in the world absurd and everything is possible."

Let this unbeliever be calm. In the dogma of the Eucharist, as in all other Catholic dogmas, there may be what is incomprehensible but not what is absurd.

Fix your thoughts for a moment upon yourselves. Is not your whole soul in every one of your senses and in every part of your body? Does not the whole soul see with the eye and hear with the ear; does not the whole soul think and will? It is not measured by the size of the body; it is not partly in one sense and partly in another; but the whole soul is in the entire body and in every part of the body. The same is true of the body of Christ, which is not indeed a spirit but has a mode of existing and acting wholly proper to itself, which we may call *spiritual.* Does not St. Paul say that the body, which shall rise in glory, will be *spiritual?* Did not the body of Christ enter into the Cenacle, the doors being closed? Did He not walk upon the waters of the lake of Tiberias? Did He not of Himself rise up and ascend into heaven? These facts prove that the body of Christ has a mode of existence which makes it like

to a spirit, and this mode is proper to it in the sacrament of the Eucharist.[1] And here, my friends, I trust you will kindly follow me in a discussion, subtle indeed, difficult and philosophical, but one that will throw a flood of light on the dogma we are defending.

The unbeliever in attacking the real presence in the Eucharist appeals to science and philosophy, and so shall we also in defending it appeal to science and philosophy. We shall limit what we have to say to an explanation of a sentence of St. Thomas, who says: "The body of Christ is present in the sacrament substantially and after the manner of a substance. *Corpus Christi est in hoc sacramento ratione substantiæ, per modum substantiæ.*" Do not fancy that I am going to give a lecture in metaphysics on substance and its accidents, but bear with me while I say what is necessary to illustrate and defend the dogma.

What is the substance of anything whatever that comes in our way, say of a stone, or of a plant, or, to confine ourselves to the subject in hand, of bread and wine? It is, as the word "*substantia,*" *substance,* implies, *what is under or beneath* that which appears, and which we call accidents, appearances, forms, qualities, or properties. The substance of a thing, then, is distinct from its

[1] St. Thomas, p. 3–9–75. Art. i ad 3–9–76, art. 5.

forms or qualities; these are accidents and are accessible to the senses.

I take from bread and wine their color; have I also taken from them the substance? No, that remains. I take from these taste and weight; does the substance still remain? Yes. I take from them extension, breadth, height, and depth, density and smell; have I destroyed the substance? No, that is *under* all these properties and qualities, just as the soul is under its bodily covering; it is *substance,* and can not be confounded with its color, taste, weight, or smell, with its density, length, or breadth, with its height, temperature or any other quality. It can change all these accidental qualities ten, a hundred times, and substitute others and contrary ones in their stead, and yet it will always remain *substance.* Convert water into ice, ice into steam, and steam again into a liquid, cool it, heat it, boil it, separate it into the two elements of which it is composed, and what have you done? Have you destroyed or changed the *substance?* Not at all; you have only changed its accidental forms. Have you seized the substance that is under these forms, have you separated it from them, have you compelled it to reveal itself to you, to allow itself to be circumscribed, touched, measured, and weighed? Nothing of the sort. It is like a fish

gliding through the water, which, when you attempt to seize it, escapes you, and goes deeper and, if you pursue it, goes still deeper, so that you can never lay hands on it and capture it.

What, then, is this *substance* of all bodies, of which we see and touch only the outside, and which is the support and the basis of what we see and touch? I can only say that it is *substance* or *essence,* the invisible and unsearchable basis of all things; we may call it *force* or *potency,* the *first principle,* the *root,* the *foundation* of all properties and qualities of things; we may with the Greek Fathers call it *energy* or a sort of *soul,* that lies concealed beneath and behind bodies, that gives them being and makes them put forth all these properties and attributes, as the rosebush puts forth flowers.

My friends, such is substance, and into this substance of the most sacred body of Christ the bread and wine are changed by divine power.

Do not inquire, then, how the body of Christ is present in the Eucharist; how it is that it has neither color nor smell, neither taste nor extension. These are properties and attributes of the body, they are not the essence of the body itself; as they change naturally, so can they be separated from the body as things that are accidental. True, man can not do away with all of them, but he can change them; he can not separate them

from the body in such way that the substance alone will be there before him. But what man can not do, God can do. Who can seriously say that God can not separate the substance from its qualities? Or that such a separation is an absurdity? What arguments could one use who should say to God: "Thou canst not do it"? One may indeed say: "I can not comprehend how this separation takes place"; but neither can I demonstrate that it is impossible to the omnipotent God. Rather I should say: "If I, a weak creature, can in place of one quality in bodies substitute others, and change them as and when I please, surely it ought to be possible to God to separate them altogether from their substance." Admitting this, and who can deny it, must not the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist also be admitted? His adorable body is present as substance separated from its accidents. As substance it has neither length nor breadth, neither weight nor form of any kind, neither place nor limits; it is like to a spirit, *Corpus spiritale,* as St. Paul says. The substance of the human body is, in as far as it is substance, as wholly and entirely in the body of the infant, as it is in the body of a grown-up man or of a giant. Have we not in one single grain of wheat the whole substance of wheat? Destroy all the wheat that is now in the world save one single grain, and in time from that single

grain the earth will be again covered with wheat as it is to-day. Therefore in that single grain was contained the mass of wheat that springs from it.[1]

Have I explained the real presence of Christ, as we hold it and as faith teaches it? I should make myself ridiculous if I said so. What have I done? Only one thing; I have shown that man with all his progress and all his science knows nothing at all of the substance of things; that we can not take this substance by surprise in its impenetrable recesses; that it has a mode of being like unto a spirit; that its union with its accidental qualities is not absolute and that God can loose it from them; that the body of Christ is present as a substance and that in consequence unbelievers, who deny the dogma of the real presence, do violence to reason when they assert that this is absurd. This they will never be able to affirm until they first show us with all the clearness of evidence what substance is, what are the relations between substance and accidents, and what are the limits of the omnipotence of God. Awaiting the day when science will have penetrated into those abysses, in which the secrets of the nature of all things lie hidden, let us go on to the third assault which unbelief makes upon us.

We Catholics believe, says our adversary, that in the Blessed Eucharist, in place of the substance

[1] St. Thomas, p. 3–9–76, ad 1.

of the bread and wine, there is the substance of the body of Christ, the species of the bread and wine remaining entire. These species having no longer their own substance remain, as it were, suspended in the air, deprived as they are of their own support. And yet they produce precisely the same effects that they would produce if they had still their own proper substance. They testify that the bread and wine are still there and because these are not there they testify to a falsehood. Hence there are three things here that are impossible. There are species without substance, a false statement of fact, and an effect without a cause. Is anything more needed for the rejection of this dogma?

The answer to all this is very brief. It is not true that there are species there without substance. God is the First Cause, the Cause of all causes, and as the First Cause He contains in Himself pre-eminently all the effects of secondary causes. This is a self-evident truth. All the movements that the inferior commanders and soldiers of an army will make at a fixed moment are already in the mind of the supreme commander. Hence whatever is done by secondary causes is done because and in so far as God has given them the power to do it, and therefore God Himself can do directly what they can do. The substance of the bread and wine supported

the species; when this substance ceases to be is there any difficulty in saying that God does what that substance primarily did? None at all, nothing is more easily conceived. And this is what St. Thomas taught and not only he but the whole school of theologians.[1] That omnipotent hand that supported the accidents of the bread and wine by means of their substance, now supports them by its own power.

The unbeliever insists: "The accidents are a continuous falsehood, since they tell me that the substance of the bread and wine is still there, whereas it no longer exists." There is no falsehood. The accidents separated from the substance are still true and proper accidents, and they say precisely what they are. "Yes," cries the unbeliever, "but in the meantime I am deceived by these accidents; they testify that the substance of the bread and wine is still there, while in matter of fact the substance of the body of Christ is there. This mystery obliges me to doubt the testimony of my senses." No, you are not deceived, nor have you any right to doubt the testimony of your senses. If sight and taste, touch and smell deceive you, the sense of hearing will correct the error, the voice of faith will give you a knowledge of the truth. How often

[1] 1. c. 9–77. a. 1.

do one or more senses deceive you, and another or others detect the deception? It would be stupid to say that an exception to the laws of nature, an exception already known, gives us a right, or imposes upon us the duty, of doubting of their existence. Because the eye and the ear have been deceived once, does this give you the right to affirm that they are always deceived and to set up doubt as a principle? Against this reason and common-sense, aye, nature itself, protest.

Again the unbeliever insists: "But here we have an effect without a cause; the accidents or the properties have no cause, for this can be no other than substance." As I have already said, there is there the Cause of all causes, and do you say that there is no cause? Do you speak of effects without a cause?

The unbeliever goes on: "But these accidents operate as if they were a cause and not accidents. They have weight and taste and smell, and they nourish just as if they were bread and wine; are not these effects without a cause?" And who told you that these effects are properly the effects of the substance rather than of the accidents? We know that the accidents are distinct from the substance; this is clear to reason and demonstrable by it; we know by faith that God

can separate the substance from the accidents, and reason can find no way to stay His omnipotence.

What are the effects of substance? It gives form and subsistence to accidents. Has substance the power to produce weight, taste, and smell, and that of giving nourishment, or does this power properly belong to accidents? We do not know and possibly we shall never know. And why can we not hold and affirm that these effects are properly the effects of the accidents, even when separated? At least could not God give them this virtue? What clear and solid argument can experience and human reason oppose to this? None whatever; they can only be silent, because their vision does not and can not penetrate into that secret. Nay, it is entirely credible that these effects are produced by the *accidents* and not by the substance, since this of itself has neither extension nor weight, is not divisible, does not alter or change, and has, if it is permissible to say so, something akin to souls, to use a phrase of the great Leibnitz. Whatever may be said or thought, the fact remains that the unbeliever is absolutely unable to show that the dogma is absurd, and this is enough for us; we ask no more. As we said at starting, we are shut up in the fortress of revealed dogma; we have without flinching sustained all the as-

saults of the unbeliever, whose duty it was to take this fortress by clear, peremptory, and irrefragable arguments; he has not been able to dislodge us; we are still here, and we are therefore victors.

DISCOURSE IV

The Eucharist is the Supreme Abasement and the Supreme Glorification of the Word Incarnate

SCATTERED up and down through the admirable Letters of St. Paul we find some sublime conceptions, expressed with a conciseness and force that stir the soul and carry it upward to the highest and serenest summits of divine truth. They are like blinding flashes of light that dissipate the darkness of mystery and reveal new and immense horizons in the distance. We find one of these flashes of divine light in the second chapter of the Letter to the Philippians where he abridges in a few sentences the greatness of Jesus Christ, making His voluntary abasement the measure of it. These words contain a poem of incomparable beauty and sublimity. They are these:[1]

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him and hath given

[1] ii. 6–11.

Him a Name, which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."

In these few words, with an art and an eloquence all his own, the Apostle brings before the mind's eye a picture of the life of Christ; he shows Him to us in the beginning, begotten of the Father amid the splendors of the saints; then he describes Him coming down and making Himself man, a servant and a victim, and eclipsing Himself on the cross; and again taking up His life and ascending on high, whence He came, and with His assumed nature entering into the infinite light of the Father, while all creatures bow down at His passing and sing His everlasting glories.

You will have noticed, my friends, that this passage of the Apostle is divided into two parts. In the first is set before us the supreme abasement, or, to use the phrase of St. Paul, the *annihilation* [1] of Jesus Christ in His death on the cross; in the second is set before us His infinite glorification. They mark the two periods of the life of Jesus Christ; the former His humiliation,

[1] As has been said before this word, the one used in the Italian, is not taken in its rigorous sense. Language has its limitations (TR.).

the latter His exaltation, the one the exact counterpart of the other.

The Apostle points to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the extreme term of His annihilation; but in this extreme term the Apostle must have included also the Blessed Eucharist, which according to his own words is the renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross: "As often as you shall eat of this bread," etc.

The Blessed Eucharist, then, can not be separated from the death of Christ on the cross, nay, it is its perennial continuation onward through all time. In this Discourse I propose to show you how the Blessed Eucharist is the extreme term of the abasement or annihilation of Christ, and also how it is the extreme term of His greatest glorification on earth.

With minds illuminated by faith let us lift our thoughts on high above all material things; above all rudimentary life; above all animal life, whether in the bosom of the earth or in the depths of the sea; above all living things, whether on the earth or in the air; above all intelligent beings that are allied to matter; above all purely spiritual beings, even the most perfect; and rising higher still let us fix our gaze, in so far as this is possible, upon the Being which is of all beings the first; which stands high above them all; which exists of itself; which does not and

can not receive aught from other beings, because it is the first; from which all life, intellectual, animal, and vegetable, receives motion, and through which it expands and radiates into an infinity of forms, and in which everything visible in the universe pre-exists in a way infinitely perfect.

And what do we see? In this Being, sovereign and most simple, I see unfolding from all eternity three processions, three forms; I see a Principle begetting, a Principle begotten, and a Principle breathed forth, all distinct one from the other and all equal, and each possessing the whole infinite Being—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

This most perfect Being, which has need of nothing, because it possesses all things in itself, might have shut itself up within itself, happy in the ineffable embrace of the three Persons, in the unity of a common Essence; but that Love, which in it is a Person, sweetly impelled it, without constraining it, to produce outside itself an image of itself, a reflex of its own being. Then by an act, single and threefold, it drew out of nothing a measureless mass of created things and disposed them on an interminable scale, beginning with the highest seraphim and going on down step by step to inorganic matter and to the imperceptible atom, the last echo of creative power. God the Father, God the Son, and God

the Holy Ghost by a single eternal act sends forth from Himself the universe, determines its movements and its laws, follows it with His eye, governs it, preserves it, and goes on perfecting it with a love like to that with which the artist contemplates and caresses some cherished work of his genius. Behold all these numberless creatures that go forth from the hand of the Creator; they proceed orderly, according to His bidding, and describe a measureless parabola; coming forth from God they must return to Him; they are like the rivers that come down from the mountains and go on to the sea, and from the sea return again by thousands of hidden avenues to the mountains. And who will lead back all these creatures, each according to its own kind, to God?

The Son, the Word Creator, because from eternity He contains and bears in Himself the types or exemplars of all creatures, should therefore be the preserver, the restorer, and the model of all. He goes forth from the bosom of the Father, yet without leaving it, just as an idea or a thought may go forth from your mind, my brethren, career about, and by word or sign enter into other minds, all the while without leaving your own, from which it is not and can not be separated. And how does the Son, the word of the Father, go forth and communicate Himself to all creatures?

He, a most pure spirit, impelled solely by love,

by an act common also to the Father and to the Holy Ghost, creates a human soul, the most perfect possible, which He joins to a body worthy of it, and in that very instant He unites Himself both to the one and to the other, and He is one sole Person, the Person of the Word, true God and true man, perfect God and perfect man. As our soul joined to our body forms one sole individual, which is at once spiritual and corporeal, so do the soul and the body joined to the divine Word form one sole individual, one sole divine Person, Jesus Christ. In the very instant in which the Son of God completes this ineffable union, two extremes are joined together, heaven and earth, God, the Supreme Spirit, and the human soul and matter, the lowest of all created things; the *first* becomes *last, alpha* becomes *omega,* the *beginning* becomes the *end,* the two extremes touch, and thus is formed that marvelous circle, which is the term of all perfection, so well described by St. Paul, when he said: *"For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things."*

The Word coming down step by step through the celestial spirits, which form a progression beyond all count, might have halted at the human soul, which is above all matter, above all principles of life dwelling in it, and reaches out to the very confines of what is purely spiritual. This would still have been an infinite descent, an in-

finite abasement, since He, the infinite, united to this finite soul, would have made Himself finite and have closed the immense abyss that lay yawning between the uncreated and the created. Joined to this soul He could have deluged with the torrents of His light all spirits and all souls, and in a measure all bodies also; He could have escaped all the miseries and all the infirmities common to bodies; His most pure nature would have come into contact with another, infinitely inferior indeed, but still spiritual, and, if I may say so, in some sense kindred and like to His own.

In these blessed nuptials between the Word and the human soul alone, all creatures in heaven and on earth would still have marveled at this miracle of His wisdom, goodness, and power, and would have lifted up their voices to Him in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving.

But the Word, in coming down to man in order to take him into His arms and bring him back to the Father, did not stop at his soul, the very crown of human nature; He went on to man's body, to this poor and abject part of his nature, which gathers up within itself all the principal elements dispersed throughout the material world, and this, like the soul, He made His own. This God, invisible in Himself, invisible in the soul, becomes visible in an assumed body; in this body God sees, walks, hears, and makes His own voice

heard; He can be touched and He is like unto man, nay his equal in all things, save only in sin. In contemplating the infinite majesty of God, concealed behind the veil of His assumed humanity, as the sun at times hides itself behind a veil of cloud and thus tempers its rays so that our weak eyes may bear them, filled with amazement and gratitude I cry out with St. Paul: *"The Son of God emptied Himself."* I no longer see God; I see only a man. What an abasement! My mind is bewildered and lost and I cry out: O faith, thou alone canst sustain me on the brink of this abyss! Borne up by thee, I bid my proud reason be still and, bowed down before this man, I repeat with Peter: *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*

"The Word of God was made flesh." It is an abasement that transcends every human conception, that holds the angels of heaven wrapt in an everlasting ecstasy. But yet He is still a man, He is still king of all creatures; as God He was king of the universe; as man He will be king of the earth and all men will be subject to Him, the great, the learned, and the powerful. It might have been so and it would seem that it should have been so. What more fitting and just than to see this God made man, seated upon the first throne of the earth and clad in the vesture of His own blinding light, receiving the homage of

all men, of men of learning, and of men constituted in authority, and the adoration of all peoples gathered from all quarters of the globe. Did He so arrange things? No. He made Himself man, but He willed to be the last of men, aye, even to bearing upon Him all the outward semblance of sin. He was sprung from a king, from David, the greatest of the kings of Israel; but He willed in order that His humiliation might be increased manifold to join extremest poverty to His royal blood. The people now and then applauded Him, recognized Him as a prophet, and as the expected Saviour of the world; but the leaders of the same people declared Him a false prophet, a seducer, a malefactor, and a blasphemer. The crowd would proclaim Him king; He fled and upon the Cross was written in derision these words: *"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."* He then abased Himself, not only to the extent of becoming man, but of becoming the poorest and weakest of men, aye, even of seeming in the sight of men to be a sinner and the wickedest of sinners, since He attempted to make believe He was God, and of dying upon a gibbet amid the most atrocious of torments, vilified and reviled by rulers both sacred and profane. Of Him it might be said with the Prophet that He was no longer even a man, but a worm of the earth, spurned by all and the refuse of

the human race. Even to this depth did the Son of God abase Himself: *"He emptied Himself."*

Humanly speaking, my friends, could Jesus Christ still further abase Himself? Could men possibly devise a still deeper descent than that of the Incarnation, of the Cross, and of the death upon the Cross? I fancy that if all men were called together to deliberate they would have replied: "There is no depth deeper than death and death on the cross; this is the uttermost term of all possible humiliations and of the moral annihilation of men; beyond this it is impossible to go." But what men could neither conceive nor execute, the Man-God in His incomparable wisdom and power both devised and carried into effect. And how? By what means? By means of the Blessed Eucharist. Through it He really touched the uttermost limit of annihilation, so that it was not possible for even His wisdom and power to go a single step beyond it. Here His divine annihilation is perfect and absolute: *"He emptied Himself."* And now I beg you attentively to follow me and you will be convinced that what I say is true!

I shall go through the whole life of Jesus Christ from the moment His virgin Mother with her blessed hands laid Him upon a bed of straw in a manger, until she kissed for the last time His face purpled with blood, and, aided by some faith-

ful disciples and a few devout women, laid His body, wrapped in a winding-sheet, to rest in the sepulcher. What do I see during the course of these three and thirty years that the Son of God lived with man upon the earth? I see the Son of God who has clothed Himself in the vesture of our mortality; I see Him hidden in the wretched nature He has assumed and taking upon Him the guise of a servant, or, I should say, I see only human nature in the various stages of its development, for the divine is concealed. I see an infant holding out His tiny hands and with tears and cries begging a mother's care; I see Him going into exile and then returning to His native land; I see a little boy sitting in the Temple surrounded by Doctors of the Law, asking them questions and replying to theirs, exciting the admiration of all who heard Him; I see a young man with soiled and hardened hands working at a common and toilsome trade; I see a grown-up man going up and down Galilee preaching the kingdom of heaven, and disputing on the streets and in the Temple of Jerusalem with the teachers of the Law. I see Him in the hands of His enemies, bruised and torn with scourges; I see Him dead on the Cross; but withal I see a living Being, who teaches, comforts, and attracts admiring crowds. True, I do not see God, who is hidden within Him, but in the majesty of His countenance and in the

light of His eye there is something supernatural, there is harmony in the music of His words, a luminous wisdom, a mysterious living power, that subdues minds and hearts. What more? This man, who is so poor that He lives by the labor of His hands and the alms of the charitable, who is made a mark for the wrath of implacable enemies, from time to time allows flashes of divine power to go out from Him; during a storm He walks upon the waves of a lake as upon the land, He searches the secrets of the heart, He cleanses lepers by the touch of His hand; by a word He drives out fevers and every manner of disease, and even death, affrighted at His presence, frequently gives up its prey. He expires on the cross and the heavens are darkened, the earth reels, the veil of the Temple is rent asunder; His body, now inert and cold in the sepulcher, rises again with renewed strength and buoyant life. Ah, let us confess it, God is not visible in this man! He is hidden under the vesture of His visible nature, and St. Paul is right in saying that as God He has emptied Himself. But yet I can still see His human nature, a nature throbbing with life, a holy and noble nature that inspires respect and is at times encompassed with a halo, revealing within Him all that faith bids me believe.

And now I fix my eyes in amazement upon this

bit of bread and this mite of wine, which the priest in the name of Christ blesses and consecrates. O blessed faith, what dost thou tell me? Under these appearances is the body and blood of Christ, the whole Christ as He is in heaven. But I question my senses and they tell me: This is bread and this is wine. I question the smell and taste and they tell me: This is bread and wine. I take this bread in my hand, I touch this wine, I measure it, weigh it, divide it, analyze it. The answer is always the same: It is bread and wine. But faith warns me to bid the senses be silent because they deceive me. Whom, then, shall I believe? I shall trust to my hearing, I shall believe the voice of the omnipotent Christ telling me: "This is My body—this is My blood." But there are four senses against one. Shall I trust, then, to this one alone? Yes, because Christ speaks, and He does not deceive. Still there should come forth at times from this bread, and from this wine some sound or accent. At least in putting the ear to it I should hear His breathing or the beating of His heart; when my tongue touches His body and His blood I should receive some sign, a single token, that it is He, He my Saviour. But there is nothing. All is silent, profound, continuous, and unalterable. His divinity was veiled in His humanity, but here His humanity is also veiled. There some fugi-

tive flashes, some passing rays, attested His divinity; but here not only is His divinity totally obscured, but there is not the slightest trace, the dimmest hint of His humanity. There I knelt before an infant, before a child, before a man, before one in an agony on the cross, before a body laid away in the sepulcher; but here I must bow down before what has not even the semblance of a man. Here I must adore a bit of bread and a mite of wine, saying: "Thou art my God and Saviour Jesus Christ." Is it not so?

My friends, is it not true that here Jesus Christ empties Himself and touches the deepest depth, the uttermost term of His abasement? In heaven the Word was in the bosom of the Father; next it was hidden in the body and soul of the assumed human nature; and now it is totally hidden under the appearances of bread and wine. What remains of the Word made flesh? Only these accidents—nothing remains to us. "*He emptied Himself.*" It would seem impossible that there could be a depth of abasement lower than this; but I venture to say there is, and I leave you to judge if what I say is not true.

When men sacrilegiously break into the tabernacle, seize the sacred vessels, and cast the consecrated species on the floor, do they cast Jesus

Christ Himself on the floor? Yes, my brethren.

When pagans and heretics, Hebrews and apostates, sectaries and the impious, impelled by hatred and delirious passion, profane the Blessed Sacrament, cast it into the flames, cover it with mud, stamp upon it, throw it to unclean animals, stab it with a dagger, fling it into the midst of filth, and make it the instrument of foul and nameless crimes, is Jesus Christ all the while present and does He endure all these infamies? Yes, my friends. He receives all these indignities in His adorable Person just as He received the like from the Jews, only He does not suffer now as He suffered then, because His body is as a ray of light that is not defiled by resting upon filth, nor is it broken when the mirror, that reflects it, is broken.

When a guilty priest calls Him down upon the altar, takes the Blessed Host into His unclean hands and puts the chalice to polluted lips, is Jesus Christ truly in those hands and upon those lips? Yes, my friends.

When men, who sneer at God and scorn His tremendous chastisements, sacrilegiously approach the Eucharistic table, and like Judas, receive the august sacrament upon their filthy tongues and into their unclean hearts, is Jesus there in that fetid sepulcher? Yes, my friends.

And think how often these profanations and

sacrileges have been repeated from the day when the Eucharist was instituted down to our own, and how often they will continue to be repeated in every country under heaven and in every corner of the earth until time is no more. Can you count this accumulation of profanations, sacrileges, and horrors, in contemplating which the mind is confused and the soul, borne down by grief, is simply bewildered? It is impossible.

It should seem that at some time or at some place Jesus, veiled under these accidents, would allow the sound of His voice to break forth, would send forth a flame of fire to consume those who so outrage Him, would by some secret power thrust them from the Sacred Table and fill their hearts with terror, would permit a ray of light to shine out, a cry or a groan to be heard. But no, nothing of the kind. All is silence; those accidents lie there destitute of life and motionless, as if they were common bread. Now, my friends, did I not say the truth? In this sacrament Jesus has not only abased Himself; He has annihilated, totally annihilated Himself over all the earth and in every age. I am confident that there is but this one reply upon your lips: Yes, Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist has annihilated Himself, *He has emptied Himself.*

The divine Master once uttered these words: "*Whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted,*"

and it was but fitting that they should have their complete fulfilment in Him who uttered them. St. Paul bears witness that they were fulfilled to the letter. He says: "For which cause," that is, because He humbled and emptied Himself, "God also hath exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father." We have seen how Christ is completely annihilated in the Eucharist; let us now see how He is supremely exalted.

Let us lift up our eyes and look out upon the world, as revolving on its axis day by day it brings before us one by one all the countries of its five continents. What a sight! What a spectacle. We see everywhere in plains and on the mountain side, in valleys and on the islands of the sea, in populous cities and in the wilderness, rising up, surmounted by the cross, giant temples, modest but beautiful churches, and unpretentious chapels. Their number is beyond count, and there is no country, be it ever so desolate and wild, in which some of them are not found. Day by day new temples arise as if by enchantment, those that have fallen down are rebuilt, and those going to decay are repaired and embellished.

For whom are all these churches, from the most vast and magnificent to the smallest and most humble? From that of St. Peter's in Rome, from those of Cologne on the Rhine and of Vienna on the Danube, from those of Moscow and London, not excluding those of heretics and schismatics, who believe with us in the sacrament of the Eucharist, down to the chapels of wood and straw, scattered through the wilds of America and Africa—all are sacred to Christ, all are dedicated to Him.[1] In all these temples, in all these churches, in all these poor chapels there is an altar, and on that altar a tabernacle, and in that tabernacle a small vase or pyx, and in that small vase or pyx a bit of consecrated bread, the least costly of all that is seen in these buildings, from the most precious to the cheapest, and yet it is to *that* that everything is dedicated and consecrated. Ask the people: "To whom are these temples erected? For whom are these altars, these columns and proud cupolas, these chalices of gold and silver studded with gems? For whom are these precious vases, these paintings and statues and ornaments, in which the costli-

[1] A great number of churches and chapels are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, to angels, and saints, but this does not mean that all of them are not dedicated to Christ, the Head of all saints; because in them all Jesus Christ is offered up in the Holy Mass, and because all honor and all worship given to the Blessed Virgin and the saints is referred on to Christ, and in every church Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is ever the center of all worship.

ness of the material is not only enhanced but surpassed by their artistic value? Upon whom are so many and so great treasures lavished?" They answer at once: "For Jesus Christ; this is His house." But where is He? Yonder in the tabernacle under these poor appearances of bread. And when these appearances are set before the people all eyes are fixed upon them, all heads are bowed, all else is forgotten and a strong cry goes up from the hearts of all: "Blessed be Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar; He who annihilated Himself under these species is exalted and glorified."

A priest or a bishop takes these humble species, puts them in a resplendent ostensorium, lifts them on high and amid a cloud of incense and the singing of hymns, accompanied by levites, goes forth from the church, walks in procession through the streets of town or city and is followed by a crowd of people and surrounded on the right hand and left by other crowds, all silent and devout; and as he goes along the people uncover their heads, fall upon their knees, pray silently and adore. What are these people, the great and the humble, rich and poor adoring? They are adoring the most august sacrament, in which Jesus Christ is hidden. Here it is clear the greatest abasement and the greatest exaltation meet.

How often have numerous armies, infantry and cavalry and lines of cannon, been seen drawn up on a great plain. At the head of them are generals, their breasts covered with medals honorably won; banners are floating in the breeze and arms are gleaming in the light of the sun. It is an indescribable spectacle of order, strength, and power. There an altar is set up, and a simple priest ascends it. At a given moment amid profoundest silence the priest takes a small Host between his fingers and lifts it up, and at the sound of a trumpet these fifty thousand soldiers, as if they were but one man, bow down, ground their arms, and the cannon roar out a salute. What does it all mean? They are saluting in that Host, which is scarcely visible, the Son of God and of the Virgin; they are adoring the King of kings veiled in those poor tokens, the most insignificant to be seen on that vast plain. Is not this the triumph of the Blessed Eucharist? Is not this a fulfilment of the oracle: "Whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted"?

I look away into the past and before me I see one hundred thousand Crusaders; the hour of battle is near at hand; at the head of the army rises an altar; the priest is about to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice; the general, the most fearless and ablest leader of his age, dismounts, lays aside his helmet and sword and serves at Mass. Having

discharged his humble office, having adored the God of the strong under these mystic veils and obtained His blessing, he leaps into the saddle, hurries away to the head of his soldiers, rushes upon an army twice as numerous as his own and puts it to flight.[1]

On a small island lost in the measureless ocean, under a burning sun, I see a man pale and worn lying on a bed of straw, surrounded by a few companions and holding a lighted candle in his hand. He had seen all the monarchs of Europe at his feet; for twenty years he had traversed the world as a victor from the Rhine to the Nile, from Thabor to the Sierras, from Paris to Moscow; he was a veritable thunderbolt of war and one of the greatest geniuses the world had ever seen. When about to go down into the tomb he bowed his head, that had never before bowed to any earthly power or potentate, adored the Eucharistic Bread and asked to be nourished and strengthened by it. My friends, may I not again repeat that in the abasement of the Eucharist shine forth the glory and the greatness of Christ?

But above all material force and power, even

[1] This was the Count de Montfort, the leader of the crusade against the Albigenses. Something similar was done by Sobieski, King of Poland, under the walls of Vienna, then besieged by the Turks. In the morning before the battle began, but while skirmishes were already taking place, he insisted on hearing Mass, after which he threw himself into the thickest of the fight and gained a glorious victory.

the greatest, stand the worth and the glory of the fine arts, of painting and sculpture, of architecture and music, and of the other arts akin to these.

They are the very flowering of the truth; they mark the degree of the progress and the civilization of a people; they are its noblest and most enduring boast, and outlast even its prosperity and its life. The bloody laurels of military greatness fade and often fill men of heart and feeling with dismay; while the olive of peace, with which the temples of the geniuses of the beautiful in every art are bound, does not cost a single drop of blood, a single tear of sorrow, and is therefore always valued and admired.

Now all these arts, throughout the long centuries from the days of the Catacombs to our own, have been employed either to build up temples and altars or to beautify them with marbles and statues, paintings, miniatures, and carvings; or again to set hymns and canticles to music, to produce the harmonies of the organ and of other instruments of wood and metal, whose notes coming down from dome and tower raise our thoughts to heaven. What marvels have these arts created, not only in great cities but also in the most obscure villages. The *Last Supper* of Leonardo da Vinci, the *Disputa* of Raphael, the *Tantum Ergo* of Rossini, not to men-

tion a thousand other splendid creations with which our temples and galleries are enriched, are the tribute that the geniuses of Art have laid before the most holy Host, in which Jesus Christ lies veiled. Can you show me a monarch, no matter how powerful and glorious, or any series of monarchs, to whom the fine arts have rendered the one thousandth part of the tribute of honor and homage that they have rendered and will continue to render to this tiny Symbol, which represents and truly contains Jesus Christ? Hidden, annihilated, He is ever the king of glory. And what could men do more if the Man-God hidden there should reveal Himself in all His infinite majesty?

But high above the fine arts and their cultivators stand sciences, and theology, the queen of sciences, and their cultivators. What have the cultivators of the most sublime of sciences, which is inseparably connected with the others, accomplished in the long course of centuries? I fancy I can see them by the thousands searching the Sacred Books, weighing every word and every syllable that bears upon the august mystery of the Eucharist; I can see them examining the volumes of the Fathers that preceded them, ransacking the monuments of Christian antiquity—rituals, figures, and symbols, stained glass, epigraphs, and images; everything that in any way re-

fers to faith in the Sacrament of the Altar; I can hear them discussing, listening to difficulties drawn from books, from ancient memorials, and from reason, examining them, solving them; making every ray of the light of science converge upon the great mystery, and summoning all science to defend it, illustrate it, and bring out into fuller light its stupendous harmonies. What monuments of tireless labor, what profound investigations, these men, in whom genius and learning, integrity and virtue and sanctity of life were admirably combined, have left us. From St. Justin Martyr to St. Augustine, from St. Thomas to Suarez and Faber, what a line of learned men, of philosophers, apologists, and theologians! They are all on their knees venerating, gazing almost in ecstasy, on those small accidents, the objects of their investigations, adoration, and love. What princely intellects are bowed in prayer before that scarcely visible bit of bread! Of Him who is hidden beneath these veils St. Paul said: *"He emptied Himself"*; and adds immediately: *"For which cause God hath exalted Him."*

But above men of power and geniuses of art, above giant thinkers and eminent scholars rise those souls who have been chastened by sorrow, who from a world of grief and exile raise their minds and hearts to heaven and beg and pray

that a ray of light from on high may come down to dissipate their darkness, and a drop of balm to soften and alleviate the anguish of their lives. These are elect souls, pure and holy, who, weary of this earth, yearn for heaven. They are to be found everywhere, in town and country, in the flower of life and in old age, among those who are bound by family ties and those who are free, and especially in the silence of the cloister. These elect souls hasten from the wards of hospitals, from the halls of orphanages, and from the schools of the children of the people, and rushing to the steps of the altar kneel before the hidden God, whom they adore, to whom they lay bare their afflicted and often desolate hearts, offer their secret trials and sorrows, pour out their prayers, and rising filled with renewed strength again take up the burdens of their life of sacrifice.

Where does the missionary, the apostle who traverses deserts and in the forest seeks out the savage to instruct and civilize him; the Sister of Charity who crosses oceans, faces storms, and lives for years in a deadly climate, seeking out abandoned babes and discharging all the offices of a mother to orphans, where do these willing heroes of charity, these martyrs to duty, when weighed down by sorrow and desolation, and racked by the many and bitter trials of life, seek

and find comfort; where do they get the strength and the holy daring of their mission? They get it from that Host, which they adore, which they receive and fold to their hearts, which is their life, their model, their love, and their all.

And, my friends, am I forgetting that countless host of men and women who accounted themselves happy to be able to lay down their lives for the Faith and for love of Jesus, hidden under the vesture of the sacramental tokens? By right do they take a place above men of power, above artists and men of learning, above men of piety and the most exalted virtue. To martyrs belongs the first place. I fancy I can see this army growing in numbers from the days of the apostles to our own; I can see these unconquerable champions, purpled with blood and holding palms of victory in their hands, surrounding their king, hidden under the sacramental veils, and singing His praises. Who can number all these heroes of the Faith, who, to guard the Eucharistic species from the profanations of pagans, the insults of heretics, and the sacrileges of the impious, feared not to face death and the most atrocious torture, happy in being martyrs of the Blessed Sacrament and mingling their blood with that of the never-ending sacrifice which Christ offers for all in the Blessed Eucharist? Who does not remember that young boy of little more than ten years

of age, who, having received from a priest the Sacred Host to carry it to a confessor of the Faith in prison, and being discovered in the act by a band of pagan young men, rather than surrender his sacred treasure, folded it to his breast and suffered himself to be stoned to death. He was a fearless martyr of Jesus Christ in the sacrament, and he has had and will continue to have in every age imitators among the children of the Church of God.

My friends, I have done, and I will only say in concluding: The Eucharist is the uttermost term of the annihilation of Christ; this is true because in it the divinity has disappeared and so also has the humanity; all that remains is but a shadow of life; we have only those poor appearances, and behind these He, the Man-God, surrenders Himself everywhere and uninterruptedly to the power of men. But even in this utter annihilation we have seen such glory revealed, such power manifested, that we are forced to exclaim with the apostle: "Here God is truly hidden. Here He has emptied Himself and for this cause is He exalted above every creature, and every tongue shall confess that He is in the glory of the Father." [1]

[1] See the 69th Conference of Monsabré, where this subject is treated by a master-hand, and from which I have taken most of the thoughts that I have endeavored to set forth in this Discourse.

DISCOURSE V

The Eucharist Makes all Believers Equally Privileged with the Apostles, and in It, Even More Than in the Incarnation, the Divine Perfections Are Resplendent

I FANCY it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a single Christian who at some time in his life has not felt rising in his heart an ardent desire to have lived during the time that the Son of God made man sojourned upon the earth and moved among men. This desire is most natural, because our hearts are so made that they impel us to desire to see those whom we esteem and love and to enjoy their company; and the stronger and more ardent the love is we bear them, the more vivid and intense is the desire that stimulates and constrains us. Had Jesus Christ deigned to abide upon this earth and to exhibit Himself in a given place to men, as He was in the flesh, and to receive the homage of all who came to Him, I think that there is not a single person who would not at least once in a lifetime desire to enjoy this happiness, no matter how difficult and inconvenient the journey or how remote the place. If long and perilous journeys are undertaken simply to see one distinguished for wisdom or power and to visit places celebrated for famous

achievements, what would men not do to gaze upon and converse with the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, the regenerator of all society, in comparison of whom, considered even from a human point of view, all the great of the world, to whom we are wont to bow down, simply vanish and are not? It seems to me that, if it were given to us only for a few moments, aye, for a single instant, to gaze upon Jesus Christ in the flesh and to converse with Him, as the apostles gazed upon Him and conversed with Him, we should have nothing more to desire upon this earth and that, carried out of ourselves for very joy, we should cry out to God with Simeon of old: "Now, O Lord, dismiss Thy servant in peace, for mine eyes have looked upon my Saviour." Then it would seem to us, that not only would there be no difficulty in loving and serving Him, but that it would be impossible not to do so, and we should wish in doing so to be second to none.

But, my friends, we have not the least reason to desire or envy the privilege of the apostles, who saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears, and touched with their hands the Word of life and the Saviour of the world. Jesus Christ, in His infinite goodness and mercy, has been lavish of His presence in every time and place, and to all conditions of men without distinction,

since we, too, possess in the august Sacrament of the Altar the self-same Jesus, who was born of Mary, who lived among men, who suffered and died for us and now reigns in heaven. Hence the words addressed by Jesus Christ to the apostles: "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them," are addressed also to us, for Christ excludes from this great happiness only the prophets and kings of the Old Covenant, not the believers of the New.

We can, then, affirm with absolute truth that the privilege granted to us in the Blessed Eucharist equals, and in some respects surpasses, that granted to the apostles, and that the divine perfections are more luminous in the Eucharist than even in the Incarnation. And now to show this.

Looking at things with eyes of faith, what is really the difference between us and the apostles, between us, who live so many centuries after the coming of Christ, and those who lived and conversed with Him? This and this only: They looked upon that countenance, full of majesty and love, through which shone a ray of the divinity within; they heard His words, vibrating with life, and felt in their hearts the joys of paradise; they received from Him at intervals proofs of tenderest love; they had in Him a friend, a counselor, a

teacher, a most loving father and, when they asked a favor, they were never either rebuked or refused. Their happiness was such that greater could not be conceived. To see, hear, converse, and live with the Son of God made man was in itself heaven upon earth.

But if we seek the source and cause of this great happiness of the apostles, and if we study the motive that makes us wish to have been contemporaneous with them, we shall find that there is one and only one, namely faith, and that this is common to all.

The very sight of Jesus filled the apostles and disciples with delight; they were the happiest of men, and why? Because they firmly believed that this same Jesus, who was reputed to be the son of an artisan, was not a mere man only, but also Christ, the Son of the living God and the expected Redeemer. It was this belief and this alone that made the apostles happy. Take from them this faith, which was their very life, and the vision of Jesus, His words, and His presence would be only the vision, the words, and the presence of a mere man, a prophet if you will, but one disowned by priests and princes, occasionally applauded by the people, but more frequently insulted, and finally put to a cruel death. It is, therefore, clear that it was faith in Jesus Christ and in His divinity and faith alone, that made the

privilege of the apostles great and enviable. Hence, if their felicity was begotten solely of their faith and if they were joyous only in the measure in which they preserved their faith, what is lacking to us that we should think ourselves less fortunate than they? Have we not the same faith? Do we not possess the selfsame Jesus Christ? Do we not believe that in the Sacred Host is contained the Son of Mary? The apostles and disciples really saw and touched God under the guise of man; we really see and touch the same God under the Eucharistic species. The divinity was concealed from the apostles, as it is from us; it was concealed from them in the flesh that Christ assumed, never more to lay aside; it is concealed from us in the Eucharistic species, with which for a little while He veils Himself. Hence the open vision of that, which makes Jesus Christ great and desirable, was denied to them as it is to us, and they saw it only as we see it, by faith, and therefore faith, being common to all, our condition is quite the same as theirs.

I see a difficulty that will naturally rise in your minds. The apostles, you will say, saw Jesus in His glory on Thabor; they witnessed many splendid miracles, which unless one were blind or wholly perverse, he must admit; but we see nothing of this kind, and hence our faith is not and can not be as strong as that of the apostles, and

our condition, which is dependent on faith, is not and can not be equal to theirs.

What you say is all quite true; but you will bear in mind that only three of the apostles were privileged to see the blaze of His glory on Thabor, and so blinded were they by it that they knew not either what they said or did; the others learned the fact from these three, precisely as we learn it from the evangelists. Are we not, then, as well off as they?

But they had seen Him work infinite prodigies; He rebuked the winds and they ceased; He commanded the sea and it was calm; He drove out incurable diseases, and poured new life into corpses already decayed.

Yes, this is all true, yet how many saw these very prodigies wrought by Christ and did not give them a thought? How many heard Him and scouted Him? How many conversed with Him to whom His words were a scandal? How many were called to follow Him and refused? How many followed Him and then deserted Him, even conspiring against Him? What did it avail these to have seen the miracles of Christ, to have heard His words, and to have lived when He lived? Did all this make them happy? No, all this only aggravated their offense and made their incredulity the more inexcusable. It is, then, ever true that faith, and faith alone avails and accom-

plishes everything in this mystery, and this faith we possess as well as those who were contemporaries with Jesus Christ. The fact, then, of having been witnesses to the miracles of Christ does not make the condition of the apostles more advantageous and enviable than ours, or His presence more serviceable and priceless.

Still is it not true that we no longer see the miracles of Christ and that in this respect the apostles had an advantage over us?

They saw the beginning of the fulfilment of the most splendid prophecies; we see them already fulfilled, and their greatness, far from diminishing, goes on increasing from day to day, since day by day new events add to their splendor. The prophecy of Malachias, who, speaking in the name of God to the Hebrews, says, "I will not receive a gift at your hand, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same. My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation," refers to the offering according to the order of Melchisedech. The apostles saw astounding miracles wrought under their very eyes; we read a written narrative of them and our certainty in regard to them does not differ from theirs; the centuries that have intervened since they were wrought have but tested them more rigorously, and the weight of the testimony of those

who have examined and accepted them enhances that of those who witnessed them.

And do we not at this very day see with our own eyes miracles which Christ is working? The establishment of the Church without human means and in spite of the opposition of numerous and powerful enemies; her preservation contrary to all natural laws; the works accomplished in and by the Church; the glory of the martyrs; the virtues which the Church continually exhibits in so many of her sons and daughters, not to speak of others, are not these miracles equal to and superior to any wrought by Him in the presence of the apostles? And is not the fact that Jesus Christ, present in the sacrament, has been acknowledged and adored for so many centuries, over all the earth by so many millions and hundreds of millions of men, and that most gifted intellects have joined with the most humble of the people in professing faith in this sacrament, a continuous and a most stupendous miracle? And is it not a miracle of love, transcending our comprehension, that the God-Man should hide Himself under the forms of bread and wine, abide with us, and have given Himself to us as food and drink? Hence, if we look at the matter properly, there is no real difference between us and the apostles, since we possess, only under another form, the same Christ that they possessed, and

we are no less favored than they, and therefore we should be as grateful to Christ as they were and love Him as much, and there is no reason for us to envy their lot.

But, it is said again, we at best see only a bit of bread and a little wine, while they saw Him as He was in human form, and this is surely a notable difference. If we could but see Him for one brief hour, our faith would revive and our hearts would be all aflame with love for Him.

Now, first of all, you will agree that it matters little whether we possess a treasure in one way or another, either shut up in a casket or exposed to the view of all, provided only we possess it and are free to use it; you will also agree that it matters little whether a friend sees a friend, or is forced to converse with him without seeing him, say through a curtain or in a dark room, provided He is quite sure the friend is present and is conversing with him. The mode of possessing a thing is secondary and accidental, and hence the value of the thing really possessed is not lessened. When, then, we are absolutely sure that we possess Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, as surely as if we saw Him and heard Him, what more can we ask? What does it matter to us whether we see Him or not? Faith is sufficient for us.

Nay, my brethren, I will go still further and say

that the difference between us and the apostles does not lessen the divine favor of the real presence; it rather adds a new motive why we should be grateful toward Jesus Christ. Listen to me and I think you will say I am right.

The omnipotent Jesus, simply because He was omnipotent, could, if He would, have shown Himself to all men during the days of His mortal life; He did not do so, and only the apostles and those living at the time who so desired enjoyed the privilege of seeing Him in the flesh. The favor, then, of seeing Him and conversing with Him was restricted, as to time, to those few years He lived on earth; as to place, to a few districts and to the cities and towns of Galilee and Judea; and as to persons, to His few friends, followers, and contemporaries. The favor was extended only to a very few. But the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not circumscribed by time; it is not limited by space; it is free to all men one by one; it is granted to all, they may go to Him where and as and when they please. Who does not see that this second favor is incomparably greater than the first, no matter in what light it may be considered. If men wished to see Jesus then, or to speak to Him, or to pray to Him, or to adore Him, they had to seek Him out and go to Him; now He comes to them, to each one individually. What a difference!

And again. Say that Jesus, instead of abiding with us under the shadows of the Eucharistic mystery, had determined to stay with us as He was when living on this earth. What, then, would our adorations and prayers be worth? What value would our faith have? Would not all these be duties laid upon us, aye, extorted from us by the living force of evidence? For what is faith but to believe what is not seen? [1]

In order, then, that we might enjoy the fullest liberty and gain the merit of faith, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should conceal Himself, not indeed under the form of a man, under which He was already known as the God-Man, but under some other form, which would be a trial to our faith and a means of acquiring merit. Should we to-day, after nineteen hundred years, see Jesus Christ in His glory on earth, as the apostles saw Him on Thabor, this world would no longer be a place of trial and a place of passage, but a destination and reward; faith would cease to be and we should enjoy the immediate beatific vision; that is, the whole economy of revelation would be destroyed and earth would be transformed into heaven.

Faith, my friends, is the noblest act, the highest homage that human nature, elevated by grace, can offer to God, and this noble act and high

[1] Quid est fides nisi credere quod non vides.—St. Augustine.

homage we offer to God in the sacrament of the Eucharist, called by excellence *The Mystery of Faith.* Here reason and the senses protest and all together rise in rebellion and cry out against this unsearchable mystery; reason cries out, because it can not comprehend how one and the same body can be whole and entire in every place where the omnipotent words of consecration are pronounced; the eye cries out, because it sees only bread and wine; touch and taste and smell cry out, because they touch and taste and smell only bread and wine; but that same ray of light that entered Peter's mind, when he said, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God," although he saw only a man, enters ours also, hushes the voice of flesh and blood and impels us, who see only bread and wine, to cry out: "Thou art the Living Bread that camest down from heaven; Thou art flesh, the flesh and blood of my God; I see nothing, nor do I comprehend; but Thou hast said it, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived; I trust to Thy infallible word; and to Thee alone, O sovereign Truth, do I sacrifice my senses, my reason, my very self." Where, my friends, will you find a sacrifice greater, more magnanimous, and more honorable to God than this? Here there is question of sacrificing not riches, or pleasures, or honors, or even the life of the body, but of sacrificing everything that is best and noblest in man, his

very reason, always haughty and unwilling to submit. And hence the merit of the faith we give to God in this sacrament is exceedingly great and so also was it an exceeding great favor in Jesus Christ to have withdrawn His sensible presence from us, veiling it under the Eucharistic species.

Nor is this all. Jesus Christ had another very important reason for withdrawing from us the sight of His humanity, and we in consequence have another very important reason for thanking and blessing Him. Faith, which tells us that Jesus Christ is God and our Redeemer, makes us long to see Him; and love, which is begotten of faith and measured by it, craves to be united with the object loved, and in this union it is perfected.

Why is the presence of a friend, of a father or mother, so dear to us and their absence so trying and distressing? Because of the ardent love we bear them. Love, then, longs and yearns to be united with the object loved, and hence those who deeply love are not satisfied with seeing one another and conversing with one another; they throw themselves into each other's arms, fall upon each other's neck, and kiss each other affectionately, each wishing thus to give expression to his ardent love and to pour his heart and soul into the heart and soul of his friend.

Had not Jesus Christ hidden His human pres-

ence under the Eucharistic veils, who would have been bold enough confidently to approach Him, no matter how deeply he loved Him or how ardently he desired to do so? How could any sinner, conscious of his guilt, have had the heart to approach Him, radiant as He would be with light and full of majesty? If Peter, as soon as he had denied Him, could not bear His glance, kind and loving as it was, how could a poor guilty sinner bear it? How could the poor and the ignorant, timid women and little children, who are frightened and lose their self-possession the moment they enter the mansions of the great of this world, present themselves before Him? If the apostles on Thabor, on seeing a faint ray of the glory that encompasses Him in heaven, fell upon the ground as if dead, what would have become of us? Jesus Christ by hiding Himself in this most divine mystery makes all equal, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, and makes the infinite Majesty accessible to the lowliest of the lowly, to the most timid child and to the most forsaken of women. All may go to Him, open their hearts to Him, tell Him their troubles and offer Him their tears. Love, when strong and ardent, is not content with simply being near the person loved; it craves a more intimate union, and longs for a commingling of hearts and lives. And such is the union for

which both God and man equally yearn. Now what union can be closer and more intimate than that between us and the food we eat and the drink we take? This is clear from the fact that they become flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood, and a part of our very being. Jesus Christ, desiring the most intimate union with man, made Himself meat and drink—*"My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed"*—in order thus to enter into him, to diffuse through him His own divine life, and to transform him. He became man to be a teacher of men, to expiate their faults, and to be an example to them; to be their food He hides Himself under the species of bread and wine, and by means of these He enters into every man who welcomes Him, and, as St. Cyprian says, by the immediate contact of His body and blood He casts out the poison of death that sin had deposited in man, sanctifies him, and makes him like Himself. In this way does Jesus Christ show His measureless love for man, not only uniting Himself to his human nature, as He did in the Incarnation, but binding Himself to men one by one by the closest ties and taking up His abode within them.

All this being so, it seems to me that Jesus Christ in concealing Himself under the Eucharistic veils has withheld from us no favor granted to the apostles, that He has made us equal to

them, and that He has done us the greatest of kindnesses in that He has withdrawn from us His presence under the guise of man, solely that we may the more easily approach Him and that our union with Him may be more intimate. So true is this that at the Last Supper, when He wished to consummate His union with His apostles, although present in body He concealed Himself under the Eucharistic species, and thus gave Himself to them as meat and drink. By so doing He made it quite clear that His greatest favor was not His natural bodily presence in their midst, but the secreting of Himself in the divine Eucharist, and that this was the uttermost length to which His love for man could go and its supremest test.

Would you have a confirmation of this? Here it is. What does Jesus Christ gain by this concealment in the mystery of the Eucharist, that fountain of all blessings? It brings Him only indifference, coldness, irreverence, outrages, blasphemies, abuse, insults, horrid profanations, and flagrant sacrileges, which He surely never would have permitted had He not so abased Himself. Alas, how often do the angels of peace, who shed tears over the agony of Calvary, gather about the altar and weep and cover their faces, that they may not see the indignities of which He is the object! All this, my friends, is what Jesus has

gained by concealing Himself in the divine sacrament! It was not, then, from love of self but to benefit us that He was led to conceal Himself. This is the triumph of His love for us.

Blessed, then, forever and ever be the stupendous goodness of Jesus, who ceaselessly works so many miracles and almost seems to forget Himself in His desire to heap graces upon us more abundantly! Let us not, then, envy the privileges of the apostles; let us, however, emulate their faith and love, since being equally favored with them we are also equally bound by the obligation of gratitude.

As the works of the artist proclaim his skill, so do all creatures, each according to its kind, proclaim the perfections of the Creator. Every creature is a page in the book of the universe in which the Creator writes His name, a mirror in which His image is reflected. Hence it follows that the more beautiful and perfect the creatures are, the better do they reflect the perfection and glory of the Creator. Thus trees tell us more of God than do rocks, animals more than plants, men more than plants and animals, and angels more than plants, animals, and men. So it is with creatures.

With God the rule is wholly different. He can not rise above Himself, because He is infinite. Creatures, being finite, can rise and progress

from height to height. Hence God manifests His external greatness and perfections when He abases Himself, and creatures grow in beauty and perfection in the measure in which they rise to greater heights. In the order of faith, and particularly in the mystery under consideration, the series of revelations is inverted, and by a singular contrast the divine perfections are the more manifest the more, that which is revealed to the eyes of flesh and reason, is lowly and common.[1] And do we not see something similar in the case of those who are eminent in this world? Is it not true that they become greater and more worthy of the admiration of men when they voluntarily descend from their high position to discharge some office of beneficence? Say that a monarch enters the cabin of a poor laboring man to comfort and aid him; or that one eminent for learning deigns to teach a poor child his letters; will not the world proclaim their praises and call them great, simply because they have made themselves lowly? And to apply this.

I have already said that God in the creation made a descent, because He made creatures the object of His thought and affection. His descent was by an external act. I have also said that God made a descent in the Incarnation, and the Church

[1] See Monsabré, Conf. 69, in which he develops in his own way this sublime thought.

says in the Creed: "*Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.*" And what an infinite descent it was! God was made man! The Son of God was made the son of a virgin! But in the Eucharist His descent is such that He can go no lower. In the creation, as I have elsewhere said, God, to use our own forms of speech, goes out of Himself to give being to creatures; in the Incarnation God goes out of Himself to give Himself wholly to individual human nature, which He personally assumes; in the Eucharist He goes out of Himself and gives Himself wholly, both as God and man, to all men who will receive Him, and this He does and will do to the end of time and in every place where the Church is set up, uniting Himself not to a substance, but to accidents, the most fragile and lowly things that can exist.

In this mystery does not the *divine power* shine out in all its splendor, and more so even than in the *Incarnation?* In the Incarnation the divine Word unites Himself immediately and personally to a nature at once spiritual and corporeal; but in the Eucharist the *divine power* separates the substance from the accidents, and, changing the substance into the body and blood of the Man-God, makes the accidents to still exist, sustaining them by His omnipotent word, thus shattering all the laws governing space and time. It is an

accumulation of miracles which only the divine omnipotence can work and which, as St. Thomas says, transcends even the miracle of creation.

In this mystery *divine wisdom* is also resplendent, since it found a way, at once simple and lowly, successfully to carry into effect the impulse of love that moved God to unite Himself to man. *Divine wisdom* would hide from the eyes of men, not alone the divinity but also the humanity; it would have Jesus Christ enter into men one by one and unite Himself, not only to the soul, but also to the body, in order to sow there the seeds of the resurrection to come; it would provide a means of doing this, which, while it spared man every sacrifice and removed all repugnance, is at once easy and accessible to all, though most unseemly and humiliating to God. *Divine wisdom* ordained that bread and wine should be invisibly changed into the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ; and bread and wine, being the natural and ordinary food of man, are admirable types of the *supernatural and heavenly* food of body and soul, which Jesus Christ offers to all the sons of Adam.[1]

[1] "What symbols! In its source bread is but a small seed deposited in the earth. There it germinates for some months, and when it appears above the ground is exposed to the inclemency of the seasons. Escaping the dangers that threatened it, its flexible and fragile stem is crowned with a spear. The grain, the fruit of a mysterious wedlock, is deposited in a delicate and transparent sheath. It grows within its covering and when ripe is harvested. It passes from hand to hand, is threshed and winnowed, and is admired for its beauty. Next it is ground, reduced

Divine wisdom would have this means one that appeals to the sense, in order that man, being attracted by what is sensible, loving and worshiping the sensible, might find in the blessed Eucharist a remedy against idolatry, and one in which he may securely rest and live holily.

Again, *divine justice* is also resplendent in this mystery, because, being both a sacrament and a sacrifice, in it the Man-God is made the one perennial victim for all the sins of men and He is continuously expiating them in Himself. Further in this mystery the triumph of the justice of God

to powder, made into dough, put into the oven, and behold it is bread. So also the body of Our Lord. It was sown as a seed in Adam, it germinated for centuries in the loins of patriarchs and kings; the tempest that violently agitated and upheaved the Jewish nation did not suffocate it; and when the years that were a providential preparation for its unfolding were accomplished, it was deposited in the chaste womb of a virgin, mysteriously espoused to the Holy Ghost. Thirty years of solitary and secluded life concealed its growth from the eyes of all, but when made manifest in public life by divine works it disclosed to all its infinite worth. Then sorrow weighed upon it, and bruised, tortured, and tried by the fires of love it became a living Bread. And is not the wine, that generous fluid that gushes forth from under the feet of the vintager and from the wine press, a figure of those purple waves that flowed from the sacred flesh of the Saviour, crushed under the press of divine justice? Do not bread and wine, made up of many grains, fused together in one substance and in one fluid, represent the great society of Christians, who through their union with Christ have become one sole identical body with Him?"

I have thought proper to quote this passage from Conference 69 of Monsabré, already cited, because it is ingenious and beautiful, and, following St. Thomas, explains one of the reasons why Our Lord raised bread and wine to the dignity of the matter of the sacrament of the blessed Eucharist.

reaches its highest degree, because all its claims are recognized and satisfied to the utmost limit, and because our redemption is ample and the price infinitely exceeds the debt.

Finally, in this mystery the *goodness* of *God* is eminently resplendent, so much so that it may be called His supreme and ineffable triumph. It is hardly necessary to say, much less to prove, that love impels the lover to wish all good things to the person loved, to long to see him, to rejoice and be happy in his presence, to give him everything he can give him, to suffer for him, and to lay down his life for him—the superlative test of superlative love. Now, my friends, has not Jesus Christ done all this for us in the blessed Eucharist, in which He conceals and annihilates Himself, and becomes our meat and drink, that He may enter into our hearts and thus consummate His union with us? In the blessed Eucharist He can say to men: "What could I have done for you that I have not done? Have not My power, My wisdom, and My justice gone to the uttermost limit that it is possible for love to go? Here you are in Me and I in you; here I live, but not I, rather you live in Me and I in you. As the Father is in Me and I in Him, because we have both one substance, so you shall live in Me and we shall be but one."

The Eucharist, then, my brethren, considered

in all its aspects, is a group of miracles which staggers and prostrates human reason. The Eucharist is a mystery such that all men and possibly all angels together could never have thought it out. It is, then, not the work of men, but of God, of a God who is the God of love, and therefore in the very incomprehensibility of the Eucharist I find a most valid argument that it comes from on high, from God, and not from men, and that Jesus Christ is God, the God whom St. John defined as *Love—God is Love.*

DISCOURSE VI

The Eucharist a True Sacrifice

SEARCH the annals of history, ancient and modern; question the monuments of all peoples, civilized and barbarous; penetrate, if you will, into the forests where savage tribes and even cannibals roam, and you will find always and everywhere, no matter how disguised or distorted, the idea of a superior Being or of superior Beings, beneficent or malevolent, it matters not. As a consequence of this idea you will find temples and altars, caverns and grottoes, where sacred rites, strange it may be and inexplicable, at times revolting, are performed. And since any sacrificial worship, no matter what, is inconceivable without priests to conduct it, you will invariably also find a priesthood. The essential part, then, and the greatest act of all worship is sacrifice, and hence associated with the priesthood you will always find the practice of offering sacrifice. The idea of the Divinity, the existence of temples and altars, of a worship and a priesthood, and finally of the practice of offering sacrifice, are the elements of all religions, no matter how degraded and irrational. You will find peoples and tribes and savage hordes, roaming through deserts and

forests without homes or dwellings, a law unto themselves, but you will never find one of them that does not possess the essential elements of a religion.

Now why is this so? Because religion is as much a part of man, and therefore of peoples, as reason is; religion is a necessary consequence of reason; and as it is impossible to conceive of a man or of peoples without reason, so it is impossible to conceive of a people without religion. If they do not possess the true religion they will have one that is false, ridiculous, and impious, a tissue of superstitions, but a religion they will have, and the central idea of it will always be that of sacrifice. Our religion then, being the only true and perfect religion, must meet every need and exigency of human nature and can not, therefore, be without a sacrifice, the culminating point of any worship whatever.

Have we this sacrifice, my brethren? Yes, we have one, and one worthy of the Founder of our religion—a sacrifice, pure, holy, and spotless, the Sacrifice of the Cross, which is perpetually renewed upon the earth—the blessed Eucharist. It is of this sacrifice that I propose to speak in this Discourse.

What is the root or underlying principle of sacrifice, and how did Jesus Christ realize it on the Cross?

Is the Eucharist a true and real sacrifice? The answer of these two questions is the subject of my Discourse.

Sacrifice, which is the destruction of something in honor of the Divinity, may seem to the superficial observer a strange thing, nay, an aberration of the intellect and an affront to the Author of nature. Everything in nature is made to exist, and not to be destroyed. God, since He is absolute Being, desires that all things shall be, and not that they shall not be. How can He, then, who is pure Being, will and desire that they shall not be?

If we look carefully into the nature of sacrifice we shall see that nothing is more reasonable. What seems to us a delirium of humanity is in fact but the teaching of the highest wisdom.

Man knows and feels deep down in his soul that there is a God, who is Lord of all things. Reason, the voice of conscience, a sort of instinct or prompting of nature, all tell him this. He knows and feels that in God's presence he is nothing, that he owes his very existence to Him, and that all he is and has comes from Him. He knows and feels that he has need of God and must have recourse to Him; in consequence he knows and feels, at least in a confused sort of way, that he must recognize His full sovereignty over him and therefore that he ought *to adore* Him, *thank Him,* and *pray to Him.* These three acts, these three

sentiments, well up spontaneously from his mind. Place a man on the top of a high mountain, from which the eye may wander freely through space; or on the shore of the ocean, when the waters are calm or in storm; or in the midst of a vast plain in the silence of the night, when the sky is bright and studded with shining stars, and, feeling himself overcome by the grandeur and immensity of the Being who created and ordered all these, conscious of his own littleness and nothingness in His presence, and impelled by a holy enthusiasm, he will throw up his hands and cry out: "O Lord, Lord, how great Thou art! And Thou art as wise as Thou art potent!" And then half unconsciously he will fall on his knees, bow his head to the ground, and adore, bless, and thank Him.

Let us fancy that the same man sees an avalanche coming down upon him, or an impetuous torrent closing about him, or a lion consumed by hunger and with head erect rushing upon him; breathless with fright he will cry aloud: "O God, my God, help me!" Adoration, praise, and thanksgiving are the sentiments natural to man in the presence of God and they are found expressed in a thousand different forms in all the languages of the globe. They are the easiest and most common sacrifice offered by man to God, often indeed unconsciously, and they are described

in Scripture in beautiful and simple phrase as: "*The sacrifice of praise—The sacrifice of the lips —The sacrifice of an afflicted spirit.*"

But when man is prostrate before his God he enters into himself, he listens to the unerring admonitions of his conscience, he hears a voice he can not mistake or gainsay, a voice that says to him: "You are guilty; you have violated My law; you must make full satisfaction, and in sorrow expiate the pleasure that you sought and took in sinning. And as there is no man wholly free from sin, so there is no man who is not subject to this law of expiation. You must therefore, O man, expiate your transgressions and give Me adequate satisfaction."

From what has been said it follows that man must *adore* God, *thank* Him, and *pray* to Him. These three acts are part of man's nature, because, being created by God, he is absolutely dependent on Him and subject to Him; and again, since they are a part of his nature, he would have been obliged to exercise them even if he had persevered in his innocence and continued in a state of pure nature.

Again, because man is a sinner, to these three acts of *Adoration, Thanksgiving,* and *Prayer* or *Petition,* a fourth must be added, namely that of *Penance* or *Expiation.*

And now let us proceed to show how these four

acts, which nature itself imposes upon man, are discharged and carried to their utmost perfection in sacrifice, the act of religion by excellence.

God is sovereign perfection, He is the absolute owner and lord of all creatures, because He created them out of nothing, because He preserves them, and because all that they have or are or can have comes from Him. Everything is His gift, and His gift alone. This needs no demonstration. Hence man's dependence on God, His creator and preserver, is absolute, complete, constant; in a word so dependent is he that God Himself, omnipotent as He is, could not break this tie, for to do so He would be obliged to cease to be what He is, obliged to deny and annihilate Himself.

Now man in the depths of his conscience understands, or at least is conscious, that it is his duty to acknowledge this supreme dominion or lordship over himself and therefore it is his duty *to adore* God, *to thank* Him, to call upon Him for aid, and to offer Him adequate reparation for offences committed against His law.

Now since the body is the inseparable companion of the mind and since man is ever irresistibly impelled to manifest outwardly his interior thoughts and sentiments, how can he give expression to adoration, thanksgiving, prayer, and sorrow? He reasons thus: "Lord, everything is

Thine; I am the work of Thy hands; Thou art absolute Master of me as of everything; I should restore this life, which I hold of Thee; I should put an end to it, I should destroy it, to show that Thou art its owner and lord and that Thou hast all rights over it. But instead of my life I offer Thee this creature, which is Thine; I offer Thee these fruits of the earth, the very first and therefore the most beautiful and precious; nay, I offer Thee these lambs, these bullocks, which, having a life of their own, are very like to me. Let the ending of this life, the destruction of these creatures, be a proof of my dependence upon Thee, of the service I owe Thee, of my adoration, of the thanksgiving I offer Thee; and let this offering, this immolation of something that is mine, that is, as it were, a part of myself, and that stands in my stead, make Thee propitious to me." Such is the origin, such the significance of sacrifice offered by man in his innocence, and which we shall call the sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving, the *impetratory* or *propitiatory* sacrifice.

But man is a sinner; all men have sinned. They have raised the standard of revolt against the Creator; they have trodden His law under foot; they are rebels and as such they should perish and give back that life, which they received from God and which they have abused by using it to rise in rebellion against Him. But shall they kill

themselves? Nature, which is created by God to be and not to cease to be, forbids it; and should man no longer exist, who would give praise to God and celebrate His glory? What is man to do?

He makes a step forward; he no longer takes the fruits of the earth, in which he sees only the lowest form of life, a life far removed from his own; he takes animals, not the wild and ferocious, but the domestic and the gentle, that live with him; of these he chooses the most beautiful, those that are without blemish and approach nearest to himself; he crowns them with flowers and does what he can to enhance their worth; and he puts his hand upon their head, as if placing upon them his own transgressions; next he opens their veins with the sacred knife and their blood flows in streams and inundates the altar; the victims fall and they are torn in pieces and consumed in the flames. Life is extinguished, the bodies are destroyed by the flames, and the punishment that should have fallen on guilty man has fallen on these animals, through which reparation is made to God's justice, and which man has substituted in place of himself, because they are most akin to him and because, by destroying them, he has destroyed a part of himself, they being his property.

The great law of *solidarity,* or *substitution,* and

of *reversibility,* which under forms the most diverse pervades all humanity, is most luminously evident in sacrifice, this being as ancient, as universal, and as common over all the earth as is the idea of God and religion and as is the existence of man.[1]

God Himself willed to establish and to fix minutely the ceremonies of sacrifice among the people chosen by Him, made the depository of His law and His promises and the preserver of the undying hopes of a Redeemer. Read the Pentateuch, and specifically Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Nearly all divine worship among the Israelites was summed up in sacrifice. Why do I say worship among the Israelites? All religious worship among peoples outside Israel, although disfigured and everywhere transformed into horrible superstitions and nameless brutalities, centered in sacrifice; it is the soul of every religion, the highest expression of every worship. The entire earth was purpled with the blood of victims and the smoke of their burning rose incessantly from all altars, so that it can be truthfully said that this

1 It is impossible to understand well the theory of sacrifice without knowing something of the law of *solidarity, substitution,* and *reversibility,* which regulates the actions of men. No one is isolated, and hence *solidarity;* from this arises the *substitution* of one for another; and from this again comes *reversibility,* both in good and evil. It is impossible for me to discuss this subject here. See Roselly, Death Anterior to Man, and what I have briefly said of it in The Young Student (Vol. iii, Tract 23).

globe of land and water was converted into an altar, upon which the blood of victims incessantly flowed and the fires that consumed them incessantly burned. Sacrifice is the hymn of adoration, thanksgiving, and petition, and the cry of the penitent that goes up from earth to heaven.

But God is infinite and sacrifice is ever finite; no matter how fair, choice, and precious the victim, it is always a creature, and what proportion can there be between the creature and the Creator? An abyss separates the one from the other and a sacrifice worthy of God can not be found. What, then, will men do? They will multiply victims and endeavor by variety and number to make up for their poverty and deficiency. But they may immolate millions and millions of pigeons and turtle doves, of lambs and kids, bulls and heifers; they may cause their blood to flow in rivers; they may darken the heavens with the smoke of incense, of aromatic plants and holocausts; but all these will still be only creatures, finite beings, which, no matter to what extent they may be multiplied, can never give to God more than a finite honor and a satisfaction wholly unequal to the debt contracted.

Again, what will men do? Feeling their utter inability to pay their debt, fully conscious of their crimes, and despairing of being able to placate heaven with the blood of animals, a miserable sub-

stitute for man himself, they said: "Man is the noblest of creatures, the king of the earth; he must adore, thank, and call upon God; he alone is guilty, let him alone placate God; let him betake himself to the temple or to the sacred groves; there let him pour out his blood and burn his body, and then will God be placated and worthily honored." A beginning was made by immolating enemies, next they went on to demand the blood of their fellow citizens and of the sons and daughters of kings, for the purest blood must be had and the most innocent. And this delirium of human blood took possession, not alone of barbarous and savage peoples, but of those that seemed cultivated, of the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and even of the Greeks and Romans. Such was the power of a frightfully distorted religious sentiment, especially in seasons of great public calamities. Even at this day, horrible to say, this dreadful delirium has not wholly disappeared from the earth.

Did the human blood that dripped from the altars suffice to quiet the terror men had of the Divinity, that had taken possession of their minds? Did men even, when they saw their brothers dying under the knife of the sacrificer, believe that they had honored the Deity and had appeased His anger? No; even then they felt how impotent they were; they trembled at the

thought of the anger of heaven and asked themselves what they could do to gain His friendship and mercy. Will it, then, be for all time impossible to find a victim at once worthy of man and worthy of God, that will span the abyss that separates them and make them friends? Such a victim must be a man, in order that he may represent men and be able to be immolated for them; and He must be God, in order that he may be equal to God and that he may adequately honor and placate Him. Is there such a victim?

O Lord send, send the Lamb that rules the world, the Lamb without spot, the Lamb prepared before time was, the Lamb that alone can take away all the sins of men! *"Send forth, O Lord, the Lamb, the ruler of the earth."* The Son of God took our nature in the womb of a virgin; He is true man and true God, a perfect mediator between God and man, precisely because He is God and man, and only one. He has a human nature that can be immolated, and the worth of His acts is infinite, because that comes from the Person, which is divine. In this human nature, a masterpiece of perfection, which He has truly made His own, the Word, God, *adores* the Father, *thanks* Him, *prays* for Himself, in as far as He is man, and prays for His brethren. Having for three and thirty years prepared this victim of human nature; having sanctified it by prayer,

fasting, and humiliations, by a life-long sorrow and by the exercise of all the most exalted virtues, He lays it upon the Cross; He pours out His blood from hundreds and hundreds of gaping wounds in His body; uttering a great cry He offers Himself to His Father, prays for men, and exclaiming, *"All is consummated,"* gives up the ghost.[1] The true and perfect sacrifice of the Man-God, foretold by the prophets, prefigured by all religious rites, presaged and instinctively expected and invoked by all humanity, is consummated; heaven and earth have touched; at sight of this holy Victim God is placated, receives man, and takes him into His arms; justice and peace kiss. There is an end of all sacrifices, because this is not only sufficient, but superabundant: *"With Him is plentiful redemption!"* By this one sacrifice the sanctification of all men is completed once for all: *"For by one oblation He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."* The God-Man, the High Priest, the great Victim took the place of all priests and of all sacrifices; He is become, in the language of the Apostle, our peace: *"For He is our peace."*

The divine Victim, He who bore the sins of all men, was stricken, His blood was poured out, and the expiation was completed. There is no need of

[1] Cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens semetipsum. "Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt. Consummatum est."

other victims, and if there were others they would be an affront to the great Victim, who with infinite superabundance paid the price for all. If all this be true, then, after the Sacrifice of the Cross there can be none other. What is to be said to this? Have we not said that religion centers in sacrifice and there reaches its highest perfection? Have we not said that the idea of religion can not be disjoined from that of sacrifice? Have we not said that there can not be found in all history a people without a religion, or a religion without a sacrifice? And shall all peoples, and chief among them, the elect people of God, have a sacrifice, and the Christian people alone have none? Have the people that have the one true and holy religion been without a sacrifice from the time of Christ until now, and shall they be without one unto the end of time? Shall Christ's religion alone lack that which constitutes the essence of religion, and thus be in opposition to what the religious nature of man demands? I do not think so, nor can it be. True it is said: "The sacrifice of the Cross is sufficient for our religion; this sacrifice puts an end forever to all other sacrifices; we must go back through the centuries and fix our eyes in faith on the divine Victim hanging on the cross. He is the one mediator between God and man; He is our salvation, and from this fount alone we must draw the waters of grace."

In reasoning thus we fix our eyes on Christ nailed to the cross, but lose sight of man and human nature. When there is question of religion and of sacrifice we must keep our eyes not upon God alone, but upon man also, since the office of religion is to bind man to God; and sacrifice, if it is offered to God, is offered to Him by men and for men, and it must therefore answer the needs of men's nature. I am separated by nineteen centuries from Christ, the Priest and Victim; I no longer see aught of that sacrifice consummated on Calvary; I believe it with all the intensity of my soul and I adore it, but I do not see it, it is too far away. I must needs see and touch this sacrifice, prostrate myself before it and adore it, for I am subject to the limitations of sense, and only what comes to me through the senses stirs my soul and kindles my faith. I must draw near to this Victim and say to myself: "There He is; He takes away my sin, He reconciles me with God, and by partaking of Him I nourish myself with His flesh, I receive of the expiation He has wrought and the grace that flows out from Him."

But Jesus Christ, the Man-God, who knew perfectly the needs and exigencies of our nature, and who created that nature, willed and saw to it that His Church should, throughout all time and in every place, have a sacrifice such as becomes both God and Him, and this is the Sacrifice of the

Mass. The Church, tracing back the uninterrupted and universal faith of the ages that preceded her and making her own the teaching which the Fathers had heard from the mouth of the apostles and the apostles from the mouth of Christ, put forth this definition in the most solemn and authoritative form, "If one shall say that in the Mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, let him be anathema."[1] Do you hear, my friends? It is, therefore, an indubitable and defined truth that the Mass is a true and real sacrifice, and whoever shall deny or doubt it has already made shipwreck of his faith.

But here we may be permitted, in as far as faith allows, to inquire into the nature of sacrifice and to see how in the Mass we have all the elements which constitute it.

The fundamental idea of a sacrifice implies the offering and destruction of a being, or the death of the victim, in such way that the victim falls under the senses, and it implies further that the victim is offered to God in recognition of His supreme dominion, or in expiation of the sins of an individual or of a people.

Now you will say, where in the Mass is the sacrifice? Where is that which is changed or destroyed? Where is the victim that is immolated? My senses see only a bit of bread and a little wine;

[1] Council of Trent. Sess. 22, c. 1.

nothing more. And yet in the Mass there is a true and real sacrifice; faith so teaches me, and faith does not err.

The priest, by the words that Jesus Christ Himself puts upon his lips, changes that bread and that wine into His body and blood; in that instant the substances of bread and wine are no more,[1] and into those poor accidents enters another life, a divine life, Jesus Christ Himself, whole and entire. He abides there as long as the accidents abide, but how? He abides there, as far as we can tell, as an inert being, totally shrouded, reduced to a condition of the extremest impotency; He abides there as a prisoner; He is motionless; He utters not an accent; He does nothing that would convey to our senses the knowledge that He is there. But we know by faith that He is there—faith that comes to us through the sense of hearing. He is wholly in the power of the priest and of men and subject to all the laws of nature. He is like a victim bound on the altar, that utters not a cry when it is slain and consumed by the flames.

[1] If my memory serves me, a few, very few theologians thought that the Sacrifice of the Eucharist might be placed in the ceasing or discontinuance of the bread and wine, but incorrectly. This ceasing of the two substances is not seen, and it is essential to a sacrifice that the ceasing or change of a thing shall fall under the senses. Hence in that case the body of Christ would not be sacrificed, but the two substances of bread and wine, which moreover do not properly cease, but are converted or transubstantiated.

But does this divine Victim, made present upon the altar by the words of consecration, pour out His blood and die in a way sufficiently evident to us? What do we see on the altar? Bread and wine. In virtue of the words of consecration there is under the species of bread the body of Christ and under the species of wine His blood, and were it not for the property that Christ has of being whole and entire both under the one species and under the other, I should have under my eyes the body separated from the soul, and hence I should see the Victim immolated. In any case I have represented to me in the separate species the death of Christ, though He is there present.

Again, when the priest consumes those species as meat and drink he puts an end to the sacramental life of Christ. As far as we can see, Christ dies; He is no longer there, and thus the sacrifice is completed.[1]

What more is needed to have a true and proper sacrifice? The Victim, through the ministry of the priest, is there; He comes within the sense of hearing by the voice of faith; I see and touch Him in the species; His death is vividly represented to me in the separation of the two species; His death is a hidden death and He is consumed when the

[1] It is clear that we with the bulk of theologians hold that the communion or the consummation of the Holy Mass constitutes an integral part of the sacrifice.

species are transformed and destroyed. Have we not here a sacrifice complete in all its parts?

But if the Mass is a true and proper sacrifice, as the Catholic Church teaches, let there be no more talk of the one sacrifice that Christ consummated on the cross, for then we shall have, contrary to the formal teaching of the apostles, millions of sacrifices daily. "You Catholics," say our Protestant brethren reproving us, "would bring us back to Judaism, which sought by a multiplicity of sacrifices to supply its feebleness and poverty; you by facts, if not in words, avow that the Sacrifice of the Cross was not sufficient and that it is necessary to add to it others without number." To which we shall reply in a few words.

We profess and believe that there is only one sacrifice, that offered by Christ on the cross. The Sacrifice of the Mass is this same sacrifice, and not another added to it; it is the same sacrifice renewed on our altars, with this sole difference, that, while that was a *bloody* sacrifice, this is an *unbloody* one, and *bloody* only by representation.

A simple illustration will make clear the Catholic dogma.

A copious spring of clear and crystal water gushes forth from the sides of the Alps; seasons come and go and years roll by, but it neither increases nor diminishes; it is ever the same. The

powerful hand of industry gathers those waters at their source and encloses them in an aqueduct, which traversing mountains, valleys, and plains, and passing through cities and towns, bears them on to the sea. Not a drop of that water is lost, and so abundant is the spring that the aqueduct is always full. At innumerable points along its length and at certain intervals, men at will pierce its walls and the water leaps forth to quench their thirst and to irrigate and make fertile the neighboring fields. Now is not the spring ever one and the same? Is not the water that flows in the aqueduct always the same and equally abundant throughout its length? Do the pipes that are inserted into its sides and the streams that flow out from it add aught to the spring? Do they harm the spring, or reproach it with being poor and inadequate? I leave the answer to you.

The Sacrifice of the Cross is an inexhaustible spring, a spring whose waters, being gathered together in the aqueduct of the Church, traverse all space and time; the innumerable openings made in its sides whence its waters gush forth are the Masses that are celebrated in every clime and in every age.

And here is another similitude. Fancy a large sphere and at its center a point whence light constantly radiates and heat is ceaselessly diffused. Fancy again that at a given moment and at in-

numerable points openings are made from the surface to the point at the center; will not all these points on the surface, each different from the other, communicate equally with the point at the center and receive of its light and heat? That central point would represent the Sacrifice of the Cross, and those different points on the surface, each distinct from the other, would correspond with the diverse points of space and time, where that first and only Sacrifice is renewed in the Mass. Explain it and understand it as you will, the Catholic dogma still remains that the Sacrifice of Christ is one and one only; that the Mass is a true and proper sacrifice; that the Sacrifice of the Mass adds nothing to the Sacrifice of the Cross, because it is in reality the same, renewed at various intervals of time and at various points in space, with only a difference of manner that detracts nothing from its truth, its greatness, or its efficacy.

Now, my friends, what follows from all this? Some practical truths of the highest importance which it behooves us to touch upon.

To us Catholics Jesus Christ is everything; He is the light of our minds, the strength of our hearts; He is our guide and our Saviour, the object of our faith, the anchor of our hope, the supremest object of our love; in Him our entire life centers, and our whole religion: *"Christ is our whole religion."* Everything either leads to Him or comes

from Him: "*The end of the law is Christ. Christ is all in all. For to me, to live is Christ. God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" This is the thought that quickens all the Letters of St. Paul, and, I had almost said, is luminous in every verse. Very well then; Christ is ever with us, He lives for us and every instant He immolates Himself for us on our altars in the Holy Mass. It is all very well to honor the saints and angels, to invoke them; it is all very well to honor and call upon their queen and mother, the Blessed Virgin, to gather about their altars and celebrate their greatness; it is all very well to venerate images of Christ, to kneel before Him crucified, to kiss His wounds; all these things are good and holy. But, my brethren, above and beyond all this is the Holy Mass; for in it we have, not an image, not a memorial of Christ and of His deeds, not His grace, but His very self on the altar in the form of a victim. Through the Mass the altar becomes truly Calvary itself, and we gathered about it as were the Blessed Virgin, St. John, and the holy women, are spectators of that sacrifice which Jesus consummated, thus summing up in Himself all the sacrifices of the Old Law. All the other sacraments may be considered as a radiance from this sacrifice, because they all come from

Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is here on the altar mystically nailed to the cross. All the graces that are incessantly diffused over all the earth, that fill and fertilize the Church; all the gifts with which the Church, His beloved spouse, is adorned; the light of truth with which she is flooded, the divine strength that sustains her, the power of her priesthood, the zeal of her apostles, the heroism of her martyrs, the purity of her virgins, the fidelity and toil of her confessors, the austerities of solitaries, the mortification of penitents, all the virtues that have made glorious the saints, who have been from Adam down to ourselves and who will be from us on to the last who will live on earth; all these came forth from the spotless Victim that the Mass places upon our altars, because everything comes to us from and through It: *"All things were created by Him and in Him. Of His fulness we have all received."* Christ is everything, and everything good comes from Him, and through the Mass Christ is with us and in us.

I look about me and I see all the children of the Catholic Church and many millions of those, whom heresy and schism have separated from us,[1] scattered over the broad face of the earth, with their foreheads in the dust adoring the Son of

[1] Here I speak of the schismatical churches, the Greek, the Russian, the Coptic and others, which having preserved the hierarchy, believe in the real presence and possess the Sacrifice of the Mass.

God and of the Virgin, the divine Victim, whom the words of the priest have brought down upon the altar; their eyes, their minds, and their hearts, like flowers that open their calyxes, seek the sun and turn toward it, are all directed toward the consecrated Host, and spanning space and time find themselves ineffably united there.

I cast my eyes downwards into that prison where millions and millions of the souls of the just suffer in hope, purifying themselves and making themselves worthy to ascend into heaven. I see them, their eyes weeping tears of sorrow and anguish, their hands devoutly lifted up in supplication, and, as if forgetful of their sweet martyrdom,[1] they look fixedly at the Holy Victim which the hands of the priest raise on high, and long for the expiation of which it is the source, hoping it may come down upon them as a refreshing dew, to assuage their pain, moderate their torture, and shorten the days of their exile.

I raise my eyes on high and see the open court of heaven; I see the countless spirits of saints and angels and the Virgin ever pure and spotless, their eyes beaming with love and gladness

[1] I call the pains of purgatory a *sweet martyrdom*, because the souls detained there *suffer voluntarily* and joyfully. And how could it be otherwise, since they have within them the charity of God, are comforted by the certain hope of being set free, know that in suffering they are doing God's will, and that suffering cleanses and beautifies them and prepares them to see and enjoy God.

fixed on this immolated Victim, which is the source of the supremest joy and glory that can go up from earth to heaven. And thus the threefold Church, the Church in conflict, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant, form but one Church of Christ, and, as stars revolving around their center, they group themselves about the divine Lamb, who dies a Victim upon the altar. What more? God the Father, the Principle without a principle of the Son, and, together with the Son, of the Holy Ghost, looks down upon this blessed Lamb, slain from the beginning of time, and in an ecstasy of eternal love, says: "This is My beloved Son; in Him I find all My delight."

And how could it be otherwise, since the Victim offers to Him a ceaseless and adequate sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving, of propitiation and expiation, and heaven and earth and all things find their reconciliation in Him?

O Sacrifice, one and sole, at once a holocaust and a pacific offering, a Victim that expiates all sin, our hope and our life, that didst begin on Calvary and dost continue on our altars, under different forms but ever the same, I believe in Thee, I adore Thee, I hope in Thee, I love Thee, and do Thou grant that I may one day see Thee unveiled and love Thee everlastingly in heaven!

DISCOURSE VII

Christ in Us and We in Him

WHAT I have said over and over again I will repeat here, namely, that in every age and among all peoples we find a religion and together with a religion we find a sacrifice, which is an essential part of religion and its most sublime expression. But the story of religions tells us of another fact that is well worth our attention. The fact is this. Among the Hebrews as among all other peoples, a partaking of the victim, in the most intimate way possible, was a part of nearly all sacrifices. Those present at the sacrifice, priests and people, stood about the victim, touched it, put their hands upon its head, sprinkled themselves with its blood, and frequently let this fall upon them in a shower;[1] but this was not all. Very frequently they took the flesh, had it cooked according to certain rites, and ate it. It would seem, then, that people believed that the sacrifice was completed by the act of eating the immolated victim, and the altar was in a way transformed

[1] The sacrifices of bulls, etc. spoken of by the ancients and mentioned by De Maistre, are well known. The blood of the victims slain was collected and poured through a sort of sieve; those wishing to be purified stood under it and the blood fell upon them in a shower. This was regarded as the greatest expiation or purification.

into a banqueting table, so that it was called a table or a sacred table.

What is the explanation of this usage or rite, which formed an essential part of nearly all sacrifices? If I mistake not there were two reasons for it. The chief purpose, and the most common to all sacrifices, was to bring about a reconciliation between guilty man and the offended God; the banquet is the symbol of reconciliation, and man and God sat down at the same table, as do those who, having been enemies, have become friends.

The second reason is a more profound one and a better explanation of the rite. The victim is put in the place of guilty man; it has suffered pain, and the most intense pain, that of death, for man, who has offered it up. The victim by suffering and death has become purified and holy, has paid its debt and completed the expiation. What does guilty man do? He takes the flesh of this purified and sanctified victim, eats it, and by doing so becomes one with it, and makes his own the expiation and purification completed by the victim. This is why Christ, having consecrated the bread and wine and offered the one supreme sacrifice, said: "*Take ye and eat. Take ye and drink.*" By the Sacrifice of the Mass Christ is there upon the altar, a victim, in the act of adoring, thanking, beseeching, and placating

God in our behalf; by holy communion He enters into us and His acts as victim become the acts of each of us one by one, thus verifying the phrase of St. Paul: *"For by one oblation He perfected forever them that are sanctified."*

Holy communion, then, looked at with the eyes of reason and faith is an appendage to sacrifice, its application and completion. Hence having spoken of the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is fitting that we should speak of holy communion, through which Jesus Christ, the divine and immaculate Victim, is in us and we in Him.

Why does Jesus Christ become our food in holy communion? What should we do to realize His wishes in our regard? This will be the subject of my Discourse.

Air and sea are filled with life in its infinite and amazing varieties; it covers the face of the earth and penetrates into its depths; it begins, increases, and matures; it grows old and dies; it is reproduced and transformed; it is a work so ceaseless and stupendous, that it baffles the mind and staggers the most vivid imagination. Science has gone down into the depths of the sea, it has searched the most hidden recesses of the globe, and everywhere it has found life, and found it where it never dreamed of finding it; it has found it in mammoth beings that have forever disappeared from the earth, and in beings invisible to the

naked eye, thousands of which career about in a drop of dew as in a lake. We are almost tempted to believe that the throb of a rudimental life is everywhere felt. Let us now ask life in all its multitudinous and varied forms: "Whence do you originally come?" It will answer in accents of faith and reason: "I come from Him who is Life; I come from God. I am not, nor can I be, the offspring of matter; I am a birth of God."

Let us put aside the question of the origin of matter and consider it in its first development; let us next follow it in its course through the vegetable kingdom; let us study it in the animal world; and finally let us venture to fix our eyes where the life of the spiritual world begins.

Here in the palm of my hand is a small seed, a tiny grain; life is dormant in its fibers; I put it under a thin covering of soil and forthwith life begins to awake. It stirs, and moves, and from all sides sends out tentacles, little thread-like roots, that seek and find in generous and kind mother earth juices which it attracts to itself and in a mysterious laboratory transforms and makes its own, a part of itself.

It peeps above the surface of the earth, puts forth leaves and through a thousand mouths seeks and finds food in air and water and sunshine; it assimilates this food, lives of it, grows, and waxes strong. My friends, all vegetable life, in order to

develop, grow, and mature, must be fed, and the food, that sustains it, is sought outside itself.

The elephant roaming in the jungles, the lark perched on the topmost bough of a tree and charming us with its song, the fish gliding through the waters, the tiny insect, the invisible microbe, how do these live? How do they grow? They seek and find nourishment in fields of pasture, in the fruit of trees, in water, in all living things of a lower order than themselves, and thus is their life preserved. They, too, have need of food, which they assimilate and transmute into their own bodies.

And the life of man, as regards his corporeal or less noble nature, is subject to the same law. From the moment he leaves his mother's womb until he goes down into the grave, he lives and grows, renews his strength, and repairs his daily waste by food, which he seeks at intervals during the course of the day from the earth, from fruits and animals, and in drink, which nature and art supply. The two-fold kingdom, the vegetable and the animal, with all their varied and rare productions, spread a splendid table for this king of the earth. Even man, if he will continue to live, must continuously receive his toll of food, but, different from other living beings, it must be prepared by himself and very often gained by the sweat of his brow. His body, this masterpiece of nature, is but one continuous transformation, which a

mysterious force is constantly weaving throughout the whole outside world, and with which he clothes himself as with a garment.

My friends, we are now on the very pinnacle of the vegetable and animal world, for such is the human body; we are on the threshold of another world, where a world incomparably more noble, the spiritual, begins. Look at the human soul, which in its inferior part abides in the body and through it communicates with the world of sense; and in its superior part expands into thought and will and traverses the limitless fields of the true and the good.

Now, I ask, has the soul need of its food, as all living bodies have need of theirs? Have the mind and will, in order to live, develop, and perfect themselves, need of food, of meat and drink, proper to themselves? Yes, my friends. Christ once said: "*Man lives not by bread alone but by every word of God,*" and by bread He meant the food of the body. What sort of bread is this that Christ calls *the word of God?* It is truth, which comes to us through instruction, and the chief and ordinary instrument of conveying it is the word or speech. As plants seek and find their food outside themselves on the earth and in the air, and as all animals, including man, as regards his body, similarly seek and find it outside themselves in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, so

does the human soul, in its most noble part, seek and find its food outside itself in the domain of truth. And as plants and the bodies of animals grow and mature by assimilating nourishment from without, which nature abundantly supplies, so do the intellect of man and his will grow and, as we should say, expand, gain vigor, and come to perfection by nourishing themselves with truth, and with virtue, the daughter of truth. And where is this truth, the primal truth, the inexhaustible fountain of all truth, to which the mind instinctively and necessarily turns as the famished turn to food? Where is this good, the true good, for which the will feels an irresistible yearning and to which it ever turns as does the magnetic needle to the pole, or as do the thirsty to the spring of water to quench the craving that is consuming them? The primal truth, the true good, the meat of our souls, and the drink of our wills, is God, God alone, who alone can appease our hunger and quench our thirst. Are we not made for God? Do not our souls go out to God as streams run on to the sea? Are they not as flowers that unfold their leaves and expand their calyxes to welcome the rays of the sun, whence they derive their beauty and fragrance? Are they not as stars that are everlastingly attracted by the sun, everlastingly follow it, and are embellished by its brightness? God the Creator, God the Redeemer,

has Himself implanted in us this mysterious force, which ceaselessly draws us to Him; it is He, He Himself who has awakened within us this hunger, this unquenchable thirst for Him: *"For Thee my soul hath thirsted. As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."* Yes, yes, God is our meat and our drink! But how can He who is infinite, immense, incomprehensible, become the meat and drink of a poor creature? Can the sea be held in the palm of the hand; can the Creator become less than His creature? O great God, how, how, canst Thou make Thyself my meat and drink?

He prepares an abode within me; He enlarges and beautifies it; He exalts my intellect by the light of faith; He expands and beautifies my heart by grace, which penetrates, purifies, and transforms it. By Baptism and Confirmation He deposits within me a divine germ, a new strength, a natural capacity by which I unite myself to Him and possess Him, and which He goes on increasing and invigorating immeasurably; and by Penance He washes and cleanses me. Now, O Lord, come to me that Thou mayest be my meat and my drink; by Thy sacraments and grace Thou hast exalted me and made me like to Thee.

But still God is ever infinite, immense, and no matter to what heights He may exalt me or how

near He may bring me to Himself, He is ever at an infinite distance from me. How can He enter me and become my meat and drink? It is necessary, O Lord, that Thou shouldst come down and make Thyself small as I am small.

And He does come down and make Himself small as man is small; He who is God, makes Himself man like unto man: *"And the Word was made flesh."*

Infinite goodness of God! I adore Thee, I thank Thee, I bless Thee. Invisible, Thou hast made Thyself visible; a pure spirit, Thou hast clothed Thyself with this flesh, in which I can touch Thee, embrace Thee, feel the beating of Thy divine life, and the warmth of Thy infinite love. But how canst Thou become my meat and my drink? How canst Thou enter into me? Thou couldst not do it as God and neither canst Thou do it as man; can a man become the food of another man? *"How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"* Yes, the Jews were right, O Lord. Thou art still too great; Thou must come down still lower, make Thyself still smaller in order to be my meat and my drink. And Jesus, the Man-God, comes down still lower; in His omnipotence and love He finds a way to make Himself still smaller, saying: *"My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed; I am the bread of life. Take ye and eat; take ye and drink."* Now

He can enter into me, descend into my body, circulate in my veins and arteries, penetrate into my heart, diffuse Himself through all the fibers of my being, sanctify it by His touch, spread through it the holy and vivifying warmth of His life, and be one with me, as He Himself said: *"That they may be one." "That they may be made perfect in one."*

The divine Word is the meat and drink of life; but man can not receive Him as the Word; He takes a body and soul to communicate Himself; but still man can not receive Him; then He places Himself under the accidents of bread and wine; now let man approach and take, let him eat and drink; He comes from the bosom of the Father to the womb of a virgin, and from the womb of a virgin, veiled under the species of bread and wine, He places Himself upon the Altar, a miracle of wisdom and power, and above all a miracle of love.

This thought, which sums up the divine, human, and sacramental life of Christ, was brought out in many ways and most ingeniously by the Fathers and theologians, but no one set it forth more gracefully or embellished it with greater life and beauty than did St. Augustine. I trust you will bear with me while I set before you a most beautiful passage taken from the saint's commentary on the thirty-second Psalm, in which, while de-

scribing the mystery of the Eucharist, he describes, and as I think unconsciously, his own soul, as only he could. Here is what he says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This is the everlasting food. Of this food do the angels eat, and the celestial spirits and the powers on high, and eating of it are filled; and yet this food, which sates and gladdens them, remains always the same and entire. But who is the man that could partake of this food? Who has a heart courageous enough to receive this bread? It was, then, necessary that this food should be transformed into milk and as milk given to babes. But how can food, how can bread, be changed into milk, if it does not first pass through the flesh? This is the work of a mother; what the mother eats, the babe afterward eats. And since the babe can not eat bread, the mother eats it, converts it into her flesh and blood, and, having changed it into milk, feeds it to the babe at her breasts, and thus nourishes it with the very bread she has eaten. How then does the Word of God nourish us with His bread? *And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.* Behold, then, the abasement of the Word, and how through Him it comes about that men eat the bread of angels." He gives Himself to the angels and to the blessed in heaven unveiled in the dazzling splendor of His glorious humanity,

but to us, still wayfarers on the earth and seeing things as in a mirror and through shadows, He gives Himself under the Eucharistic veil.

Jesus Christ makes Himself our meat and drink, and through the accidents, with which He veils Himself as with a mantle from our eyes and all our other senses, He makes known to us the marvelous effects that He works in us; for the same effects that meat and drink naturally produce in our bodies this divine meat and drink produce in our souls, and by reflex action, at least in a measure, also in our bodies, which are inseparable from our souls.

Meat and drink, remarks St. Thomas, repair our organism, sustain, preserve, and increase it. And how do meat and drink do all this? By assimilation. What is assimilation? In the living body, precisely because it is living, there exists a mysterious force that separates from meat and drink the atoms that are suitable to its nature, attracts them to itself, transforms them, dissolves them, and makes them pass into its own organism, and the soul quickens them and gives them life. This mysterious force, undoubtedly emanating from the soul, works according to its nature and its characteristic properties; but, if I may use an image, familiar indeed but clear, it is the soul itself that is building its own home and, as needs require, repairing it, sustaining it,

strengthening, and beautifying it. Such is assimilation.

But here, my friends, a difficulty comes up. It is a law of nature that in taking meat and drink we assimilate both the one and the other to ourselves. Is this what takes place when we nourish ourselves with the most holy body of Jesus Christ? Do we transform the divine food into ourselves? You will see at once that such a transformation and assimilation as this would be absurd. Jesus Christ, the Man-God, assimilated to us! In that case we should be forced to say that the body of the Saviour would be subjected to the same transformations as are ordinary meat and drink, and, were this possible, Christ would be debased and man would not be lifted up. No, my brethren, this is not the assimilation which is effected in us by the blessed Eucharist; it works in a way precisely the opposite to that of natural assimilation. We transform the food we take into our own bodies; in the Blessed Eucharist the food we take, or Jesus Christ, transforms us into Himself, or better, assimilates us to Himself. And in order that this truth may be understood as it should be, it will be necessary to speak of it at some length and to examine the law that governs any assimilation whatever. The law is this: The living body, being the more noble, assimilates the less noble body; the superior, en-

dowed with fuller life and greater strength, transmutes the inferior endowed with less life and less strength. Of this we have proofs under our eyes. Inorganic matter, a confused mixture of various elements, is lowest in the scale of existences; it is destitute of life, inert, and therefore incapable of attracting anything to itself, and capable only of being attracted. Plants, in which the first form of life appears, attract to themselves the inorganic matter scattered over the earth, through air and water, assimilate it, and in doing so grow and clothe themselves with a mantle of green.

But above the vegetable life is the animal, which is distributed over a vast scale. Animal life assimilates inorganic and vegetable matter, and in thus assimilating it ennobles and dignifies it. I am not ignorant, my friends, that sometimes the less noble life assimilates parts of the more noble; thus trees may assimilate the elements of animal bodies, and animals and wild beasts may feed on human beings, live off them, and gain strength. But when? And how? When animal life has quitted these bodies, and their elements, loosed from the energy that held them subject and united, can and must become subject to other energies, which attract them to themselves and assimilate them. But no body, whether of beasts or man, can ever become the

food of any other being and be assimilated by it, as long as it lives and belongs to another principle of life. This is an inviolable law of nature.

Now to apply all this to the mystery of the Eucharist. We have on the one side man, and on the other the Man-God; one a human life and the other a divine, coming into contact; man receives Jesus, who becomes His meat and drink, under the Eucharistic accidents. It is needless to say that the divine life will prevail and attract to itself and assimilate the measurelessly inferior life of man. The sun attracts the planets, not the planets the sun. All creatures, from the speck floating in the air to the highest seraphim, are arranged in a stupendous order and on an immeasurable scale, one above the other, reaching up to God. All creatures, each after its kind, tend to rise and rise toward that sovereign Being who created them and who necessarily attracts them, each participating more or less, according to its capacity, of His life.

When Jesus Christ, infinite in power, enters into man under the Eucharistic species, the work of supernatural assimilation begins. Listen again to the great Augustine, who, speaking in the person of Christ, says: "You would, O man, have Me as thy food; so far well, for My body is meat indeed. But bear well in mind, I am the meat of great souls, that is of generous souls, who

know what they want and what they are doing, and long to rise and become like unto God. Increase then, O man; lift up thy thoughts and desires on high, come and eat the food I have prepared for thee.[1] Thy eyes shall be opened indeed and thou shalt see who thou art and who I am, and thou shalt not change Me into thee but I shall change thee into Me."[2] And could it be otherwise? He, the Word, He, light, warmth, and infinite life, enfolds, penetrates, quickens, transforms the soul and with and by the soul the blessed body which He took in the virginal womb of Mary, and makes this perfect humanity His own in such way that He can say: "I the Word, the Son of God, am a man and the Son of Mary." The human nature of Christ is like to a cloud all aflame with the brilliant light of a golden sunset; or better, like a mass of purest gold, luminous and glowing with the heat that has penetrated it through and through; or better still, like a soul diffused everywhere throughout the body, quickening it and informing it.

Very well then. The blessed body of Jesus Christ, wholly penetrated, quickened, and informed by His soul, together with the Word, which is united to both body and soul, enters into us and takes possession of our whole being.

[1] Cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis.

[2] Nec tu mutabis Me in te, sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in Me. (Conf. lib. iv, c. 10.)

Think for a moment of the work that ought to be wrought there if we oppose no resistance. To be sure, the Man-God can not change the substance of our soul and body into the substance of His soul and body, this being impossible; but He can by the intimate contact of His humanity with our body and soul weaken our tendencies, deaden our passions, elevate and purify our thoughts and affections, put new strength into our will and make us like unto Himself. If the continuous presence of a person of noble sentiments, the companionship and friendship of elect and holy souls, exert over us an influence for good and make us better and more inclined to virtue, what is to be said of the presence and intimate contact with us of the Man-God in holy communion? Will not our soul grow into the likeness of Him and will not this be in a measure reflected in the body? God alone can fully know the wonderful work of intellectual and moral assimilation which the Holy Eucharist little by little produces in him who receives it worthily. He, who has had the enviable good fortune to know intimately and to live familiarly with one of those souls, who have been in a sense deified by the assiduous exercise of virtue and by the frequent use of holy communion, will comprehend what I fail to express in words. The entire countenance of such favored persons, their eyes, their conversation, their manner, their whole

being, radiate a light, diffuse an atmosphere of peace, give forth, I had almost said, a fragrance and exhale a sweetness, a something, I know not what, of the superhuman, that inspires respect, excites veneration, and makes one instinctively feel the presence of the divine. In such souls is verified what Christ said: *"He that eateth Me the same shall live by Me."* And the Apostle wrote: *"We are the good odor of Christ"*; and again: *"I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me"*; and elsewhere: *"We are transformed into the same image from brightness unto brightness, as led by the Spirit of God."*

Still, my brethren, not alone is the soul that eats at this table of the bread of angels filled and little by little marvelously transformed; the body also participates of it, and so true is this, that Jesus Christ Himself gave a distinct promise to this effect, saying: *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day."*

Divine grace and its fruit, eternal life, belong directly and properly only to the soul, since the body of itself and separate from the soul is not capable of either; but inasmuch as it is joined to the soul, it is a necessary part of its nature and with it forms the perfect man, and hence it ought to have some share in its blessings; and of these in which it will share Jesus Christ named the prin-

cipal and most valuable when He spoke of the body's final resurrection. Our body receives as in a vase the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, puts it in a direct communication with the soul, which it thus fills with divine life; and why should not the soul, filled with divine life through the agency of the body, share with the body a part of that exuberant life which it receives only through the body? Is not the body its companion? Is it not greatly indebted to it? The soul, then, wholly filled with grace and life, penetrates the entire body and all the atoms of which the body is composed; it seals them, sanctifies them, and deposits in them an immortal germ, which will in season spring into life, gather about it those same atoms and of them reconstruct a new body and one worthy to be the soul's companion for all eternity. Would you have an illustration of this? We have one in the great book of nature and it is referred to by Christ and St. Paul. Consider an ear of wheat; it has only one life, that received from its seed and fed by earth, air, and sunshine. That ear conceals within its bosom ten, twenty small grains, into each one of which the single life of the ear has put a germ of itself, which the eye can not perceive. Commit all these grains to the earth; they die, rot away, and their atoms are dispersed. But the hidden germ of life, put into them by the mother ear, reappears and produces

other grains, collecting about each of them the atoms of which their body is formed. Christ does the same in the blessed Eucharist; He puts into our bodies of death the seeds of life, which will make them live again a new life at the end of the world. The word of Christ can not fail and He said: *"I will raise him up at the last day."* That flesh that was touched by the holy, glorious, and immortal flesh of Christ, which felt its warmth and the heat of its life, which received its impress and was sealed by it, will indeed and must pay its debt to nature and be dissolved into its primal dust, but it must also some day rise and live again in the fulness of immortal youth and be one of those who gather about Him who first rose from the dead, and whom St. Paul in a beautiful phrase calls *the first-fruits of the risen: "And I will raise Him up in the last day."*

My brethren, in the passage where Jesus Christ promises the blessed Eucharist as meat and drink, I find a sentence that needs an explanation. Our Saviour says: *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him."* These words mean that His abode in us and ours in Him is not a passing, but a stable one, at least until we drive Him out by sin. But we know that His real presence in us lasts only as long as the Eucharistic species last, a very short time, which of course the words, *"abides in Me and I in him,"*

imperfectly describe. The real presence of Jesus Christ in us is indeed restricted to the duration of the species, but not so the effects of His real presence, that is, the grace He diffuses in us. Our body takes meat and drink and in a brief time they cease to be meat and drink; but the nourishment received, the restored and invigorated strength still remain. If a seal is imprinted upon a body and then removed, the effect or the impression remains; if a warm fire is lighted in a room, it may be put out, but the warmth continues in the room; if a vase of odoriferous flowers or a delightful perfume is put in a parlor, both may be removed, but the parlor is still filled with a sweet fragrance. The same happens in us; with the ceasing of the sacramental species, the real presence of Jesus Christ also ceases. He departs from the soul, but He leaves it nourished and strengthened, sealed as His own, warm with the fires of His love, all fragrant and perfumed with the sweet aroma of His presence; it is like to a splendid royal palace which the monarch quits, shortly to return, and which remains superbly decorated.

We have now seen why Jesus Christ gives Himself to us as meat and drink in holy communion; let us go on and inquire what we ought to do in order that the end He proposes to Himself may be successfully attained.

We must guard against an error which, if not *theoretically,* is at least *practically* easy to fall into and quite common. As regards all those acts, and they are countless, that require the concurrence of secondary causes, namely of man, a great many go to extremes. At one time everything is attributed to God, as if the co-operation of man were useless; again everything is ascribed to man, as if God's aid were unnecessary. The truth is, the concurrence of both God and man is required; and if either is wanting the end desired is not attained. This is true in the natural order, and it is still more true in the supernatural. As faith teaches, God wills that all men without exception be saved, but if to the true and operative will of God is not associated the true and operative will of men, they will not be saved. This is illustrated in the sacraments and in the blessed Eucharist itself. The Eucharist is the bread of life, and as such of its nature it nourishes, strengthens, sustains, and sanctifies those who receive it; but if they who receive it are not disposed, if they resist and do not co-operate, the effects of the sacrament are necessarily not obtained. Is the sun, that is ever shining in the heavens, to blame if a man, who closes his eyes or hides away in a dark cavern, where a shaft of light never enters, does not see? What, then, is

required of men in order that the blessed Eucharist may produce in them its marvelous effects?

We have already seen that supernatural assimilation takes place in a way the direct opposite to that of the natural; for while in the latter man assimilates food to himself, in the former God assimilates man to Himself, because the superior force always attracts to itself and assimilates the inferior; hence St. Ignatius, martyr, said rightly: "I am Christ's wheat, and so let the beasts' teeth be my mill that I may be ground and be found to make good bread." There is an inviolable law that governs natural assimilation and nutrition and this must also be observed in the supernatural, namely: Any food whatever, before it can be assimilated and nourish him who takes it, must, if it has life, whether vegetable or animal, divest itself of it and be wholly dead. Whatever lives, as long as it is alive, can not become the food of any one, because it resists assimilation and lives of its own life. This is an incontrovertible truth; two living things battle against each other, and one becomes the food of the other only when it is overcome and surrenders its dead body as a prey and a conquest to the other. Hence if the human soul, and together with it in a sense the body also, its companion, is to become the food of Christ and be assimilated

to Him, it must first die. But how can the soul die? It can and must die the death so often spoken of in Holy Writ and especially in the writings of St. Paul. He says: "For you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ"; and again: "So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin"; and elsewhere: "If, then, you be dead with Christ." When man detaches his thoughts and wayward desires from the world, from all things round about him, from his body and from himself; when he cuts away those attachments, which like fine, tough threads, bind him to creatures; when he silences his inordinate self-love, which makes him live in himself or in natures for whom he has an excessive affection, then does he die to himself and to the world, since to cease to love an object is to die to it; then can he be assimilated to Christ and grow into His likeness.

I have often seen an industrious farmer grafting a tree. Having prepared the tree he cuts the little twig that he wishes to graft into it and skilfully inserts it. The life of the tree then flows into the twig, a new life is substituted for the old and there are two lives in one and one in two. If the little twig were not dead to the tree from which it was taken, and if it still drew from it the life-giving sap, it could not receive it from the new tree, because one would repel and exclude the other. And thus, too, it happens in the super-

natural life. Our assimilation to Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist requires that the life of the world shall cease in us, and, as the latter goes on decreasing, the former will progress until the transformation is complete. Away, then, with all thoughts of our souls, all affections and desires, tendencies, habits, and customs, which emanate from the rankness of this earthly life, and Jesus Christ in the blessed Eucharist will pour into us a flood of divine life that will penetrate every fiber of our being and cause to spring up within us new thoughts, holy affections, and longings, chaste tendencies, clean habits, and heavenly practices, and will make our souls like unto His. To live with Jesus Christ and of Him, we must first die to the world and to ourselves, for nourishment can not be assimilated until every trace of another life is extinguished in it and it is well ground and prepared.

And even all this is not enough, my brethren, to effect our assimilation to Jesus Christ; it is not enough to remove impediments and open sluices through which the waters of divine life, that stream out from the blessed Eucharist, may flow; we must co-operate with Christ, and according to our strength, as grace moves and inspires us, concur in the superhuman work of our transformation. Our minds and wills, cleansed of all the dust of earth, and, as the divine oracle

has it, dead to themselves, must by gentle but determined effort turn toward Jesus Christ as the needle turns to the pole, as flowers seek the sun and drink in its light, as rivers hasten on to the sea. Let the mind, borne up on the white wings of faith and radiant with its splendors, leave this earth and, rising above the fogs that darken it, penetrate the Eucharistic veils and rest with Him whose vesture they are. Let the will, spreading its sails before the breeze of hope and borne away on the wings of the fires of charity, go forth confidently toward Him, who is hidden under the mystic tokens, unite itself intimately to Him, and consummate the ineffable union which was the yearning desire of His Heart at the Last Supper: *"That they may be one."*

And now one final remark. The Eucharist is pre-eminently the food of the soul. It is to the soul what ordinary food is to the body. If you do not supply the body for any length of time its necessary nutriment, what will happen? It will languish; it will be incapable of hard and continuous labor; it will lose its vitality and strength, and after a severe, miserable, and trying struggle, worn out and exhausted, it will die. This is precisely what happens to the soul that endures a long fast and abstains for months and years from the life-giving bread of the blessed Eucharist. Having been starved for so long it

feels its strength ebbing away; it can not bear up against the assaults of the passions, against the snares of the evil one and the seductions of the world; faith begins to waver, hope loses heart, charity is quenched, and all the virtues, like trees without water and burned up by the sun, wither away and die. Poor souls, condemned to die of hunger while the bread of life is offered to them day by day and of which they might freely partake if they would! Let us then, be up and doing, cleanse ourselves from our stains, approach the Table of Love and receive this living and life-giving Bread. Let us eat of it, feed upon it often, and, thus strengthened, we shall be able to traverse the desert of this life and ascend the holy mountain of the Lord, where we shall look upon Him face to face and see Him as He is.

DISCOURSE VIII

The Sacred Heart

JESUS CHRIST is the author and object of our faith; He is the foundation and end of our hope; He is the source and the term of our love; all comes from Him, all goes back to Him; He is, as Holy Writ teaches, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the alpha and omega of all things and hence it is most true to say: *Christus est tota religio.* All religion is summed up in Christ.

The Church is heir to His wealth and His glory; she is His faithful bride; she lives only for Him; to Him, her bridegroom, in a thousand ways, by her preaching and her sacraments, by prayer and the sacred pomp of her worship, she is ceaselessly recalling the minds of the faithful; she makes Him live continuously in the midst of men through the grace and truth that flow out from Him, but especially through the Eucharistic mystery in which He is truly and really present among them.

Consider the divine art by which the Church keeps ever living among her children the memory of the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. She opens the ecclesiastical year with the holy season

of Advent, and by transporting herself, if one may so say, into the time that preceded the coming of Christ and associating herself with the patriarchs and prophets and with Moses, she salutes her Saviour from afar; then gathering all her children about His cradle she adores Him and, sharing the gladness of His birth, she sings: "I bring you tidings of great joy; a Saviour is born to the world." Next, she shows Him to us in the act of pouring out the first drops of His blood, the beginning of the Sacrifice of the Cross, and this is the mystery of the Circumcision. Again, she invites us to look upon the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, prostrate at the feet of the divine babe, and here we have the mystery of the Epiphany. Then in the Sundays that follow she shows the Babe to us in the arms of the venerable Simeon, who recognizes Him and proclaims Him to be the Saviour of the world; again she shows Him to us flying into Egypt, returning to Nazareth, as a child of twelve years of age in the Temple of Jerusalem, and as a young man voluntarily laboring in the workshop of His foster-father. Then she points Him out in the desert preparing by prayer and fasting for His public life, and here we have the season of Lent. Then she bids us assist at His passion and cruel death on the cross during the days that we properly call Holy Week. And finally she calls us to witness

His glorious resurrection on Easter and His triumphant entrance into heaven on Ascension Day.

Such is the liturgical year, which unfolds before our eyes the life of Jesus Christ from the day of His birth until that of His ascension.

But when the period of the life of Jesus Christ ends another period begins, which the Church in His name and by the authority of His word will continue until the end of time, and here we have the feast of Pentecost. The life and power of the Church are derived wholly from Jesus Christ. And where is He? In heaven He makes glad the blessed by His very presence, and on earth in the Sacrament of sacraments, the blessed Eucharist, He illuminates, nurtures, and sanctifies the Church, and here we have the feast of the Body of Christ.

What a magnificent spectacle the Church lays before us during the course of the year! The story of the life and works of Jesus Christ and, inseparably connected with it, the memorials of the palmary truths of our faith, pass before us so luminously that all, the learned and the ignorant, must know them, I had almost said, in spite of themselves. In the liturgy of the Church the divine truths, the life and works of Jesus Christ, are ceaselessly and most efficaciously set before the people.

Now I ask, my friends, whence comes that stu-

pendous series of the truths and works of Christ that is brought before us from Advent to the feast of the Body of Christ? From what spring do they issue forth? I do not hesitate to say that they all come from the measureless love of Jesus Christ. And where is this measureless love perfectly symbolized? What is its instrument and its organ? And whither does it lead us? The adorable Heart of Jesus is the most perfect symbol of the love of God; it is its organ and its natural instrument; it is the goal to which this love leads us. There are three truths that I shall endeavor to make clear in the Discourse.

It may be that you have never reflected on a truth, most simple in itself and the primary motive of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, a devotion that is now universal in the Church. The truth is this: Every worship and every devotion practised and recognized by the Church has a two-fold object, the one sensible and material, the other invisible and spiritual, and the latter, being the end of the former, is therefore the more noble and excellent. For instance we worship the cross, the nails, the lance, the crown of thorns, the winding-sheet, and all other instruments that were sanctified by coming into immediate contact with the adorable body and blood of the Saviour. These instruments, these holy memorials of the passion of Jesus

Christ, constitute the immediate, visible, and material objects of our worship; the invisible and immaterial object, upon which our eyes are chiefly fixed, is the divine love revealed to us through these instruments, and it was God Himself who deigned to use these means and to give them an inestimable value in the work of redemption. Now this is precisely what takes place in the worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. His Heart is the primary, visible, and material object of our worship, because it is the symbol and the proof of the infinite love of Jesus Christ for man, as the Church sings: "*Hoc sub amoris symbolo . . . Christus sacerdos obtulit;* Christ, the eternal priest, offers His Heart as a symbol of His love." This is what the Church elsewhere solemnly declares and confirms: "*Ut charitatem Christi patientis et pro generis humani redemptione morientis . . . fideles sub Sanctissimi Cordis symbolo devotius et ferventius recolant.*" That is, the Church venerates and adores the Heart of Jesus in order the more devoutly and ardently to celebrate and glorify the love that impelled Him to die for us on the cross, a love that is wonderfully and perfectly symbolized for us in the Sacred Heart. Notice, my friends, what is done in the profane world, the symbol is always and everywhere visible. I see a winged lion holding the Gospel in its paws, and I salute Venice, the

Queen of the Adriatic. I see a flag floating in the air and on it a leopard, and I salute proud Albion, Queen of the Seas. I see a shield and on it an uncrowned double-headed eagle with outstretched wings, holding a sword in its talons, and I say at once: "Behold Austria." You will not find a nation, a single society of any kind, or a family that claims to be noble, that does not add to its honor by having some sort of sign or emblem in which its name and its glories are symbolized and summed up. And woe to him who insults this symbol or banner; he is an enemy, just as he who honors it is a friend.

The same is true of the Church. Everything in her has its figure and symbol, and they are a language in themselves, most beautiful and of surpassing eloquence. Here it is a dove that calls to our minds the Holy Ghost; again it is a lamb or a pelican, reminding us of the Man-God; again it is a lily, representing purity; the ship adumbrates the Church, the eagle symbolizes the evangelist St. John, the lion is a figure of the evangelist St. Mark, and so on. In liturgy, in painting and sculpture, in the language of the Church everything is symbolical. She speaks to and teaches the people by signs and figures the most diverse, and they understand her with marvelous facility; I will venture to say that the people prefer this language of signs and symbols to

common speech, because it brings deeds and truths more clearly before their minds and imaginations. They prefer to see deeds and truths rather than to hear them, for what they see with the eye is more permanently stamped on their minds than what comes to them through the ear.

Now what symbol or figure of love is more living and natural than that of a heart? As soon as my eyes rest upon that bright red figure, as soon as I see that wound distilling drops of blood, and that crown encircling it, and those flames rising out of it, my own heart goes out to Jesus, and I call to mind all His love for man, His passion and death, and the whole story of His life; at that sight my heart is stirred, set aflame, and, conscious that the love of Jesus asks for love, I love Him with all the intensity of my soul. It is therefore a reasonable and holy practice to honor the figure of the Heart of Jesus as a symbol at once conventional, natural, and highly expressive of His measureless love for man. Let those, then, blush for shame and hold their tongues, who would banish from the Church devotion to the Heart of Jesus Christ, this beautiful and perfect emblem of divine love, and who make it a target for sarcastic witticisms and insolent jests. Why do they not with equal and greater reason rail against devotion to the cross and the instruments of the passion? Why do they not find fault with the in-

spired writings that so frequently speak of the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, which are part of His humanity, yet not, like His Heart, the noblest part? When we speak of the Heart of Jesus Christ and when we adore it, our mind is fixed on His Heart, not, as separated from His body and from His blessed soul, but on the Heart hypostatically united to them, on the living Heart, which forms part of His glorious humanity.

But it would be a gross error to regard the Heart of Jesus Christ as a simple symbol of His love and nothing more; because it is also its instrument and material organ. The Heart of Jesus, my friends, is to be adored, not solely because it was and is in immediate external contact with the divine Word, as were the nails, the lance, the cross, and the instruments of the Passion, but because it was assumed, possessed, divinized, and made its own by the Word itself, and hence it is truly and in the strictest sense of the word the Heart of God; the Heart of God Himself lives and feels, loves and communicates Himself to men. Let us bring out this thought.

In man we must distinguish two most essential powers or faculties, namely the faculty or power of understanding and of reasoning, and the power or faculty of willing and of loving. As these two faculties or powers are distinct one from the other, and so distinct that they are sometimes an-

tagonistic, so also have they distinct seats in the body. The seat of the intellect's activity is the brain; whereas the heart is more properly the seat of the will and the field of its exercise.[1] Hence when one thinks or reasons he points to the head, and when he loves he points to the heart. Again, when one thinks and meditates long and intensely he feels a tired sensation in the head, and when one loves ardently he feels his heart beating violently and deeply stirred. When we wish to indicate that a man is highly gifted intellectually, we say he has a fine head; and when we wish to indicate that a man is charitable, generous, and loving, we say he has a good heart, or is a man of excellent heart. As we see with the eyes, speak with the tongue, toil with the hands, taste with the palate, so do we love with the heart, which is agitated, throbs, expands, and burns according to the intensity of its love. It was not, then, accident or conventional speech that led men to select the heart as the symbol of love, but the cry of nature and the voice of truth. And so true is this that had we lived separated from the society of men, we should, did we wish to signify our love

[1] It is not my purpose here to enter into physiological questions or to inquire into the researches of the ancients regarding the seat of the soul. The soul is wholly in all parts of the body, because it is simple; but as it receives sensations by means of the senses, so do intellectual acts manifest themselves in the nerves of the *brain*, and the affective or emotional acts in the *heart*. This is a fact, but I am not going into a scientific explanation of it.

for another, have used these or like expressions: "I feel for you in my heart; I hold you there; you are ever in my heart; your name is written there; my heart is yours; give me your heart; my heart burns for you." Yes, the heart is the center of life;[1] from it the blood sets out and to it the blood returns, to renew itself and restore its waste, and again goes forth on its mysterious and marvelous round. The heart is also the instrument of love and the seat of all the affections, just as the brain is the instrument of the intellect and the home of thought.

Now, my friends, what takes place naturally in every man must without doubt take place also in Jesus Christ, because He is a true and most perfect man, like to us in all things, save only, as faith teaches, in sin and its consequences. If, then, the heart is in us the material instrument of love and its organ, we must also say that the Heart of Jesus, personally assumed by the Word and inseparable from it, is the material instrument and organ of His infinite love. As He saw with His eyes and heard with His ears, so did He love

[1] Speaking physiologically, primarily the brain is the center of life, and secondarily the heart. From the brain comes the motion of the nerves and with this motion life. From the heart comes the motion of the blood which feeds the nerves and the whole body. The one can not live without the other. These truths are enough for my purpose, and it is needless to enter into other questions.

with His Heart. Who can doubt it? It is a consequence of the mystery of the Incarnation.

It is indeed true that the Word, even before He became man, loved all the works of His hand, and, after the angels, man better than all else; it is also true that His love was then wholly dissociated from any corporeal instrument, inasmuch as His nature was incorporeal and sovereignly spiritual; but from the moment He became man He loves and must love also with the material Heart He assumed, for the reason that this Heart is inseparably united to the divine Person of the Word, and does nothing and can do nothing without the abiding concurrence of the Word, as St. Anselm acutely observes.

From this follows an amazing truth, namely, that the eternal love of the Word for man is continuously reflected in the Sacred Heart, which is warmed into life by its rays and responds to it, as does a melodious harp touched by the fingers of a skilful player. The sun is ever shining in the heavens and its light is white; but let its rays pass through a prism and instantly they take on all the colors of the rainbow. The sun is the divine Word; the wondrous prism, that refracts its rays and colors them, is the assumed Heart; it is the organ of divine love, or rather it is the medium through which this love is made visible,

the brightness of the eternal light mingles with the red and the purple of this blessed Heart.

Who can ever describe the riches hidden in this divine Heart? Who can ever look into its depths, fathomed only by the eyes of God, and the vehemence of His infinite love? Who can ever, I will not say express in words, but even conceive the warmth of that throbbing Heart, which is, let it never be forgotten, truly the Heart of God? When I set myself to form some sort of notion of the treasures of love concealed in the Heart of Jesus I can find no image more apposite than this: I fancy an ocean so vast, that no matter where or how long the eye searches, it can find no trace of a shore, and it is lost in that immensity of waters and in the no less immense vault of the heavens that seems to hem them in; and I say to myself that this ocean is like the divine love that no one can comprehend. Then I fancy that this measureless sea flows out into a majestic river, through which alone its waters are ceaselessly discharged, spread abroad, and fertilize the surrounding plains. Thus, it seems to me, we can form no sort of idea of the measureless and immeasurable love of God, which, unable to contain itself because of the ardent longing that impels it to pour itself out and communicate itself to creatures, rushes into the Heart of Jesus, fills it, inundates, and flows out from it on every side. And thus does

this Heart become a perennial spring, a vast river ever at flood-tide, which supplies to the dwellers of earth and heaven, to angels and men, the waters of eternal life, so that we can say: "The stream of the river maketh glad the city of God."

Yes, my friends, this Heart is the spring, the stream of the waters of life that makes the field of the Church verdant, bright with flowers and rich with fruit; it is the gate and the way by which God Himself descends from heaven and comes to us. Would you understand this? Follow me and you will say I am right.

God comes to us and imparts Himself to us by teaching us, by suffering, and dying for us; He comes to us by flooding our souls with the treasures of His grace, by all those wondrous works that He did for us on earth, and which endure in the sacraments and in the Church, and will endure until the end of time.

Go in thought through the entire life of Jesus Christ; examine all His acts one by one from the moment He entered the virgin womb of Mary until He breathed His last breath on the cross; number, if you can, all His labors, His afflictions, and His sorrows; count all His words, His footsteps, and His journeyings; put together His thoughts, His affections, and His longings; call to mind the institution of all the sacraments, those inexhaustible streams of grace and life; recollect

above all the mystery of the Eucharist, where He is imprisoned on our altars and where He blooms as the tree of life in every corner of the globe; think of the chains, the scourges, and the crown of thorns, of the indignities, the blows, and the sentence of death; of the cross and the nails, of the vinegar and gall, of the agony and the desolating abandonment of Calvary; consider Him as He is depicted for us in the Gospel, all that He has done, is doing, and will do for us until time is no more; add to this all that He was ready to do for us and did not do, for so great was His love that it would have impelled Him to suffer and die as often as there were souls to save, and to endure torments a thousand times more intense than those He actually endured, if all this were necessary. My God, what marks of infinite worth! What proofs of infinite love! What could this amiable Jesus do for us that He has not done? Now I ask: Whence did all these works come that Jesus did for man, that fill all space and go on increasing age after age? Where were they first conceived, where matured, and consummated? All, all without exception, are the birth of divine love: "*His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us.*" And since the Incarnation, where has divine love its home? Where is the seat of its activity? The abode of divine love and the place of its exercise is the Sacred

Heart. All these acts rise out of and go forth from this Heart as branches from a root and rivulets from a spring. They are all sparks of that divine love wherewith this living Heart is aflame. In this Heart all the blood of divine life is stored and its beatings send it forth through the arteries and veins and the open wounds of His body, and cause it to fall drop by drop on souls, purifying, healing, and vivifying, beautifying them and making them holy.

If, then, all good comes to us from divine love, if the rays of divine love, through the mystery of the Incarnation, converge toward and center in the Heart of Jesus, in which all His actions had their beginning and their completion,[1] it evidently follows that this Heart is the living and perennial spring of all grace; and it also follows that we can find all things in this Heart; that in it are written in indelible characters all the works of the Man-God; and that in it we can see as in their origin or germ everything that Christ did during the days of His mortal life. And here I beg you to follow me for a few moments.

Here I hold in the palm of my hand a grain of corn, a seed of a pine, a germ of a cedar. Some

[1] Truth, the rule of action, enlightens the mind; the light of truth descends as a ray into the will, whose home is in the heart; here the light of truth, like an electrical spark, kindles the flame of love, and love determines the act; hence every action begins in the mind and is completed in the will, or in love, which is the same as saying, in the heart.

day a stalk will spring out of this grain, a pine will rise out of this seed, and a tall cedar will grow up out of this germ. The stalk, then, is enclosed in the grain, the pine is contained in the seed, and the cedar exists in the germ. Had I an eye sufficiently keen to penetrate into every part and atom of this grain, this seed, and this germ, I could certainly discover in embryo the stalk, the pine, and the cedar that will one day spring out of them and whose leaves and branches will rejoice in the light of the sun. Who can doubt this? Very well then. In the Heart of Jesus are contained, as in their germ, all the acts of that love that little by little flowered into the deeds that He continued doing during the course of His life. Hence in that Heart were pre-contained the whole series of His works, all the daughters of His love; and therefore in that Heart I possess and adore all the stupendous economy of Redemption, because it all comes from it as from its origin and source.

I will repeat with the Church: "This Heart is the sanctuary of the New Covenant;[1] it is the new Temple incomparably more holy than the old;[2] it is the veil that conceals the Holy of Holies;[3] it is the ark in which the human race was saved from the angry waters sent in punish-

[1] Cor, Sanctuarium novi Intemeratum foederis.

[2] Templum vetusto sanctius.

[3] Velumque scisso utilius.

ment of sin;[1] it is the table on which God wrote the law of grace and love; it is the altar on which was offered up the Host of peace and pardon and on which all humanity did penance and was reconciled to God; it is the nuptial bed on which Jesus Christ consummated the marriage with His spotless bride, the Church, which is the gate of heaven.

But Jesus Christ was not content with sending forth from His Heart the fertilizing dews of His celestial gifts; He would open the treasury of His wealth, break down its doors, so that all might freely enter there and enrich themselves to their hearts' content. And hence, says St. Augustine, the New Adam, urged by the love that consumed Him, was lifted up on His nuptial bed, the painful bed of the Cross; there He slept the sleep of death, and while sleeping that profound sleep His Heart was cleaved and there issued from it His virgin bride, the Church, a bride betrothed in blood and sorrow. As from the first Adam, while asleep in the garden of delights, Eve, the mother of the living, was formed, so from the pierced side of Christ, sleeping on the uplifted cross on Calvary, was formed the Church, the mother of the living according to the spirit. A beautiful image this, which is used by other Fathers also, and which the Church has translated into the language of

[1] Hoc ostium Arcae in latere est
Genti ad salutem positum.

poetry, a passage of which is worthy of being reproduced here: "From the riven Heart of Jesus, the Church, His bride, is born.[1] From this Heart in a seven-fold stream His graces flow out forever, in order that our vesture may be made clean in the blood of the Lamb."[2] St. John Chrysostom, contemplating this open Heart, from which the warm blood is still oozing, turning to his hearers, cries out in an impulse of love: "Behold the chief source of the waters of faith and grace; behold the spring from which they flow; they come forth from the cross, they gush from the side, from the transfixed Heart of our Jesus."[3] When this Heart was opened the barrier was broken down that held back the impetuous stream of love, which then overflowed and let loose the last drops of blood and water that were to cleanse and nurture the Church.

Now my friends, could this loving Jesus, who shed all His blood for us, have given us a more eloquent testimony of His love? His Heart im-

[1] Ex corde scisso Ecclesia
Christo iugata nascitur.

[2] Ex hoc perennis gratia
Ceu septiformis fluvius
Stolas ut illic sordidas
Lavemus Agni in sanguine.

[3] Vis et aliam huius sanguinis scrutari virtutem? Volo. Unde prium cucurrit inspicias et de qua fonte manavit. De ipsa primum cruce processit: latus dominicum initium fuit. . . . Primum baptismate diluimur, postea mysterio dedicamur (In Joannem, Hom. 19).

pelled Him to suffer, it led Him on to the most opprobrious death of the cross, it nailed Him to the cross, held Him there until He expired. When this Heart had ceased to beat and to suffer, when there was no longer in it a trace of life and it was already cold, it did not cease to love, nay the flame of love within it burned then more warmly than ever. When it was already dead it would be run through with a cruel lance to open a wide entrance to it and to give a last expression to its burning love.[1]

But the Heart of Jesus is not alone an instrument and a portal through which divine love is incessantly going forth and poured out on all men; it is also the goal for which we should strive, the way and the door by which we may enter and consummate our union with God, the place where our souls should make perfect their friendship with Jesus Christ; it is, says St. Bonaventure, the spring of the waters of life, where those who thirst may approach and drink.

Everything necessarily and continuously tends to go back to the source from which it came. The wayfarer, wandering in a foreign land, yearns to see again his native country; the ray that falls on the mirror is reflected back to its point of departure; the rivers rush on to

[1] Latus eius aperuit ut illud quodammodo vitae ostium panderetur, unde Sacramenta manaverunt (S. Aug. in Joannem, 120).

the sea, whence by devious paths they return again to the springs in which they have their source; flowers turn to the sun and the sun opens their bosoms and fills them with beauty and color; the blood, going out from the heart and circulating through the body, again flows back to the heart. Divine love comes to us from the Cross, which is, as we have said, its origin and source; and our hearts, attracted by divine love, as by a heavenly lodestone, should go out to Jesus and in Him find contentment, as in their natural center. I might compare divine love to a thread of gold with which Jesus gently binds and ties the hearts of men to Himself; but whence comes this golden thread? It comes from the Heart of Jesus, because that Heart is the center and organ of divine love. It is, then, natural for men, thus bound and tied by this thread of love, to be gently and strongly drawn to the Heart of Jesus and to be united with it.

Nor should we pass over another truth, which wonderfully enforces the thought I have been insisting on. It is clearly manifest from daily experience that the most potent means to move others to love us is to show that we love them. The poet-philosopher and theologian has wisely said: "*Amor che nullo amato amar perdona.*" [1] Love begets love; nay, it stimulates it, and that

[1] Love, which absolves no loved one from loving.— INFERNO.

in the measure in which we love. Now how deeply has Jesus Christ loved us and in what measure? This Heart, believe me, calls out to us in language mute but eloquent; it bids us draw near to it and enter into it, in the same way by which it gives itself to us, as a saint says.[1] This Heart tells us the whole story of divine love and in showing itself to us repeats the words of Holy Writ: *"Son, give Me thy heart."*

And in truth for what reason other than to point out to us the way of the law and the way to enter into heaven did Jesus open to us the door of His Heart? In the Gospel Jesus Christ calls Himself *the way* and *the door: "I am the way, I am the door."* I am well aware that Jesus Christ in applying these terms to Himself designated His whole person; but I also know that all the wounds of His sacred humanity are called and in fact are portals opened for our salvation; and also that if the entire humanity of Jesus Christ may and should be called *a way* and *a door* for men, so also should His Heart, the chief organ of life and the most noble of the members of the body. If all the wounds of the body of Jesus are openings and doors whence issue forth mercy and salvation, why may not as much be said of His Heart?

[1] For this reason was it run through with a lance that a way to it might be opened to us.

And I believe that the fact that He wished the wound in His Heart to be the last was not without a profound and mysterious meaning. By this He wished to signify that while all the other wounds had been made by His Heart, these were too small to give vent to His love, and that the wound in the Heart was the royal way open to all men and led into the very sanctuary of His love. He did as they do, who reserve their most beautiful and precious gift for the last, as a sort of complement and crown of all the others.

What wonder that the Church recognizes in the door of the ark of Noah, opened by command of God and through which the patriarch and his family entered and were saved from the waters of the flood, an image of the Heart of Jesus? What wonder that the saints vie with one another in exhorting us to enter into the Heart, that we may be united with God and sanctified? Some, as St. Bernard, call it the temple of the Divinity, the sanctuary of grace; others, as St. Bonaventure, call it a treasury, an inexhaustible mine of choicest gifts and the gate of paradise; others again, as St. Thomas of Villanova, compare it to a nest into which the Church, like a turtle dove, puts its young to protect them against the snares of the enemy, until their wings are grown and they can be set free in the heavens. They call it the abiding place of virgins, the citadel in which souls fleeing from

the world seek shelter, an asylum of peace, the hope and the refuge of sinners.

I will cry out with St. Augustine: "Longinus, the soldier, opened for me the side of Jesus and I will enter there and rest secure." [1]

[1] Longinus mihi aperuit latus Christi et ego intravi et requiesco securus.

Feast of All Saints

DISCOURSE I

Commentary on the Gospel

And Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when He was set down, His disciples came unto Him, and opening His mouth He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets that were before you.—Gospel, *Matt.* v. 1–12.

My friends, I have often said that all the mysteries of faith, all the great works accomplished by Jesus Christ on earth, are with

great wisdom distributed at proper intervals throughout the liturgical year, and commemorated and celebrated with appropriate feasts and special rites. These mysteries and works, in which the life of Christ is summed up and our faith condensed, are as so many milestones, or rather as so many superb monuments, which the Church has set up along the way that we must travel from earth to heaven, and which keep ever living and vivid in our minds the beautiful and blessed image of Christ, our Mediator and Saviour. These mysteries begin with His birth and end with His *memorial* by excellence, namely, the blessed Eucharist, through which He is ever really present among us. Hence it would seem that our series of Discourses should close with the feast of *Our Lord's Body,* or the mystery of the Eucharist. But is not the Church one of the greatest of the works of Christ? Is it not through her that Christ teaches, governs, and sanctifies men and dwells really in their midst? And the most noble part of the Church, the part that has finished its glorious work and now reigns and is happy with Christ in heaven, is, as you know, her advance guard, the Church triumphant, the great army of the saints. It is, then, but fitting that to the mysteries of Christ should be added the feast of All Saints, and hence the Church on this day wisely brings it before the minds of

her children. Having, then, first laid before us the life and triumph of her Leader and supreme Head, she calls to our minds and exhibits to our view the life and triumphs of those who most closely followed Him and who now are resplendent with the light of His glory in heaven.

And assuredly no passage of the Gospel could have been selected that better answers her purpose and more faithfully reflects the spirit of to-day's feast than that which you have just heard read and which is sung in the Mass of this day. It contains the Eight Beatitudes, as they are commonly called, or the eight principal paths, paths of sorrow and trial, which lead on to eternal blessedness. Along these paths walked courageously, after the example of Christ, those innumerable legions of our brothers whom we honor to-day and who are now triumphant in heaven, and these paths we, too, must walk if we wish to reach the goal they have reached. The subject, then, of this my first Discourse on this feast, will be a brief and simple explanation of the Gospel of the day, or of the Eight Beatitudes.

Going along the road, all covered with rocks, thistles, and undergrowth, leading from Cana to the lake of Galilee, one reaches an undulating and desolate tableland, which looks down upon Tiberias. To the left toward Saphed rises a small elevation, stony and partially covered with

grass, from which one may easily get a view of Hermon and the lake to the north and east, and of Thabor to the south. This slight eminence is called even to this day the Mount of Beatitudes, because an ancient and venerable tradition says that on this spot Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, which opens with the Eight Beatitudes, nor is there any reason to doubt it.

Jesus delivered many discourses, abridgments of which are given by the evangelists, but only two of these are of any considerable length, that on the Mount, recorded by St. Matthew, and that at the Last Supper, narrated by St. John.

It is hardly necessary to note that of this Discourse on the Mount only the leading heads are related by St. Matthew, and that, as it came from the lips of Jesus, it must have been very much longer and more detailed. This the character of the other discourses would lead us to believe, and we feel absolutely certain of it when we consider the amplitude and importance of the subjects touched upon, which would require a fuller development, the more so since they were addressed to multitudes whose intelligence was necessarily limited: *"Seeing the multitudes . . . He taught them."* [1]

[1] Some interpreters, and among them the most authoritative, hold that St. Matthew inserted in this Discourse many things that Jesus taught on other occasions and at various times, and

One should say that in this Discourse Jesus brought together and condensed whatever was most noble and elevated in His moral teaching, and it may well be called, as some have called it, the solemn *proclamation* of the new society and the *fundamental law* of the kingdom of Christ. The world had never before heard proclaimed moral teaching so perfect, and withal proclaimed so simply, so concisely, so confidently, and, I will add, so daringly, as that of the Beatitudes. Nothing could be more opposed to the teachings of the world, whether Jewish or Pagan, and at the same time more conformable to the needs of the generous aspirations that are rooted deep down in man's nature—an opposition and a conformity that seem manifestly contradictory, though they are not if one searches the depths of our nature. But we must hasten on to the explanation of the single verses of the Gospel, which may be defined as the fundamental articles of the code of Jesus Christ.

"Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when He was set down His disciples came to Him, and opening His mouth He taught them."

Before beginning to speak Jesus went up on

an examination of its single parts makes this opinion not unlikely.

the mountain, and why? It seems certain that He had passed the night on the mountain in prayer, and in the morning the multitude, with the apostles, gathered about Him to listen to His words. He went up on the mountain that He might be the more easily heard, and also that, since the Old Law had been given on the top of the mountain, the New Law, the complement of the Old, might also be proclaimed from a mountain.

But what a difference between the proclamation of the Old Law and the proclamation of the New! The former was promulgated on the top of a mountain amid thunder and lightning, and only Moses went up there and remained—and woe to any one who drew near; and that Law was given written on stone. The latter was promulgated without any display whatever and so simply that there is absolutely nothing like it. The Lawgiver sat and the apostles and the people stood round in an attitude of respect, but without the least shadow of fear, as children might gather about a father. Jesus spoke, He did not write; and the Law that He gave to man was not engraven on stone, but written on the tablets of the heart, and its promulgation was committed to a few fishermen, ignorant of the high mission to which they were called. There never was, and there never will be, promulgated on this earth a more sublime,

more universal law and one destined to last longer than that which was promulgated on that mount; and there never was in ages past and there never will be in ages to come one promulgated more simply, more modestly, more concisely than that, or one that has been or will be more popular. Neither time, nor men, nor the vicissitudes of peoples, nor progress, nor science will ever cancel one syllable of this code. It will abide as unchangeable as God is unchangeable, and will be observed by millions of men, not from fear of brute force, but because they will be intimately persuaded of its truth and will love it.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." These are the first words that fell from the lips of the divine Lawgiver. Undoubtedly, the word *poor* in this place is in opposition to the word *rich,* as if one should say: *"Blessed are they who are not rich."* But how can this be, O Lord? The world regards poverty as a misfortune, as an evil, and the root of countless evils. Poverty brings with it hunger and thirst, uncomfortable homes, scanty raiment, continuous and wearing toil, sickness, desertion, the scorn of men, and a life filled with privations and sorrow; and Thou callest it *blessed?* Then rich men can not be of Thy kingdom? And the very fact of their being rich implies that they are lost? What sort of a kingdom is Thine?

Who could ever think of following Thee? Not the rich, because they are rich; not the poor, because, if for no other reason, they desire and do all they can to get rich. Thy words will be lost on the desert air or will become the subject of the sterile lucubrations of tiresome and extravagant philosophers. And yet this was not so.

When in language the most concise He called the poor *blessed* He did not mean to indicate a condition of life, but a disposition of mind, and this is clearly indicated by the words *"in spirit"* added to the words *"blessed are the poor."* In other words Christ said:[1] "Blessed are they who, being wealthy, esteem the things of this world as something base and ignoble, uncertain and fleeting, that can not satisfy the higher needs and the noble cravings of the human heart. Blessed are they whose hearts are not enslaved by riches, and who do not make these their end, as if these were the object for which they were created and placed on this earth. Blessed are they who keep their hearts detached

[1] St. Augustine thinks that the poor *in spirit* are the humble. The word *"spirit"* means also *mind* and the words *"poor in spirit,"* are according to him equivalent to *poor*, because not vain or proud, that is those who are humble. Vulgo magnos spiritus superbi habere dicuntur. Quis nesciat superbos inflatos dici tanquam vento distentos? Quapropter hic illiguntur pau peres spiritu humiles et timentes Deum id est non habentes in flantem spiritum. This is rather overstrained. To be sure ava rice and riches puff up, but this must not be confounded with pride. There are beggars who are proud.

from riches and who in spirit raise their thoughts to God, our only true end and happiness."

The human race is divided into two great camps, those of the one, that of the rich, are few, very few in number; those of the other, that of the poor, who are forced to toil for a paltry and scanty living and suffer infinite privations, are very numerous. The rich in greater or less degree oppress the poor, and the poor look with envy and anger upon the rich and are a constant and terrible menace to them. It is the old, terrifying, and ceaseless conflict between the rich and poor, waged with varying fortune since time began, and which to-day has become more ferocious than ever, because the harshness and the greed of the one have become more exasperating, and the poverty of the other more intolerable. New legislative enactments and the fruits of a civilization, which has certainly made progress, may in a measure soften the asperity of the conflict, but they can not put an end to it; if anything they widen its scope and add to its ferocity, for, on the one hand, the progress of science tends to accumulate wealth in the hands of the few, and, on the other, the discontent of the poor and unfortunate increases, because their advance in education begets more and more a desire to claim rights, whether real or exaggerated it is not my purpose here to inquire.

Christ, addressing Himself to all, to the rich, who have abundance and live sumptuously, and to the poor, who suffer and are in need, says: "Blessed are ye all, if, keeping before your minds the thought of a life to come and of heaven, your true and abiding country, you cast out from your hearts an excessive love and desire for the things of the world. Once freed from this immoderate love, you wealthy will cease craving to grow more wealthy, and you will, as justice and charity demand, be fairer and more charitable to the poor; and you poor will place a limit to your desires and your wants, and, in the hope of one day possessing the true riches, that are the heritage of all, you will find such peace and happiness as are possible here below."

The great remedy proposed by Christ to all, to rich and poor alike and in equal measure, is "*poverty of spirit,*" and this because of the unfailing wealth that is in store for us all in heaven. He taught us all that we must pluck out from our minds the vile root of concupiscence and free ourselves from that dominating love that binds us all to the fleeting goods of earth; and He reminds us that we must be their masters and not their slaves; that they are means and not the end; that we may use them but not abuse them; that the rich may be saved if only they are poor in spirit; and that the poor may be

saved if only they moderate their desire to become rich.

Now, my friends, can any teaching be more beautiful, more reasonable and beneficial to society? If both rich and poor would but carry it into effect, not because they are forced or constrained by law to do so, but because they are persuaded of its truth and utility, would not the tremendous problem that confronts us and is a menace to society be solved? Would not this teaching, while making the present life not only bearable but happy, also gain for us salvation and perfect happiness in the next? Let us never forget, my friends, that the hope of the kingdom of heaven is a compensation for the ills of this life, and that if we lose sight of the blessings to come and give ourselves over to the goods of this world, we shall, in order to gain them, rend and tear one another to pieces. Take away faith and the hope of heaven and the earth would be converted into a battlefield; the strong would crush the weak and we should have here a veritable hell.

Let us go on to the second Beatitude or the second article of the divine constitution:[1] "*Blessed* are the meek, for they shall possess the land."

[1] In some codices this second Beatitude is put third. We follow the Vulgate.

St. Thomas, reasoning acutely, shows that all the passions may be reduced to one, namely, concupiscence; if this passion seeks unduly its own excellence, it becomes pride; if it gives itself up to excessive eating and drinking, it becomes gluttony; if it yearns for riches, it becomes avarice; if it craves sensual pleasure, it becomes luxury; if it seeks its own comfort, it becomes sloth. It sometimes happens that the goods which concupiscence sets itself upon having are contested or refused; then concupiscence is irritated against whoever opposes it and denies it what it wishes, and hence come envy and anger, which are in fact only another form of concupiscence; and hence, too, it is very properly divided into two modes or parts, which both philosophy and theology agree in calling, the one the *irascible* and the other the *concupiscent;* the latter attracts to itself the object loved, and the former repels whatever contests either its acquisition or its possession.

In the first Beatitude Jesus condemns the immoderate desire of riches, which are sought as a means or instrument for obtaining all pleasures, and hence He opposed the *concupiscent* part of passion; in the second Beatitude He curbs the *irascible* part, saying: *"Blessed are the meek."*

Who is meek? He is meek who has a tranquil heart and a kind word, who with a soft answer

turns away wrath, who suffers without complaining of injuries received and loss sustained; still more so is he meek who rejoices when he receives affronts and sustains damage, who overcomes the malevolent by kindness and closes the mouth of enemies and calumniators, who in a word is a perfect imitator of Him, who said: "Learn of Me because I am *meek* and humble of heart." Meekness is the highest degree of patience and resignation; it is the inseparable companion of humility, the friend of mortification, the daughter of peace, the flower of modesty, the smile of innocence, and the sweetest fruit of charity.

These gentle souls, whose countenances are ever serene and radiant, whose speech is ever winning, whose eyes are ever kindly and beaming with joy, whose temper is ever even and unruffled, who overcome by yielding, "shall possess the earth." What earth is here meant, my friends? The land of the living, as Sacred Writ says, the land upon which shine the rays of the eternal sun, making it radiant and fruitful, the land of peace and order, where tempests are unknown, and sorrow and weeping; the land of the inheritance promised to the sons of the eternal Father, of which that promised to the children of Israel was a figure, in a word, heaven.

"*They shall possess the earth.*" Again I ask

what earth is here meant? There is no doubt, and experience proves it, that gentle souls, meek spirits, tranquil characters, enjoy a peace and serenity of heart that makes less bitter the vicissitudes of life. They are always tranquil and they know nothing of the strifes so frequent among the irascible; their company is welcomed by all, and their word is listened to by all, even by their enemies, with reverence and respect; and they exercise an authority over the minds of others, kinsmen and acquaintances, that is all the more gracious and efficacious in that it is cheerfully accepted, frequently invoked, and never gives offence. Yes, they are meek of heart who reign, not over the bodies, but over the minds of men, and know how to find a way to their heart; their kindly and ingratiating speech, says St. John Chrysostom, is like water that quenches the fires of discord and extinguishes the flames of anger and hatred, and of such it may be truly said that they possess the earth, for they have already here below a portion of the reward that will be theirs in its fulness in heaven: *"They shall possess the earth."*

Jesus goes on and promulgates the third article of His proclamation to men, saying: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."[1] Mourning is the outward and natural

[1] The word *"mourn"* of the Vulgate, is more accurately rendered

expression of sorrow, so that in ordinary language *mourning* and *sorrow, weeping* and *suffering* mean the same thing, and we say "He mourns, he weeps," meaning "He *suffers* and *endures pain.*" And here, if I mistake not, the highest point is reached in the contrariety between the teaching of Christ and the wisdom of the world. What can be more contradictory than to place one's joy in sorrow, one's happiness in suffering, one's blessedness in pain? It would indeed be a manifest contradiction if the words of Christ were to be understood to mean that mourning and sorrow of themselves constituted joy and felicity; but Jesus Christ regards mourning and sorrow as means to attain joy and felicity. Thus, we say that the medicine that restores health is sweet, though it is disagreeable and bitter to the taste; and thus also we say of the knife, that cuts off a gangrened member, that it is merciful, though it causes the acutest pain. The beatitude of suffering is, not in the suffering itself, but in that which it will in its own season obtain, namely, an everlasting reward. And here we must bear well in mind a condition, which Jesus Christ does not mention in express terms, though He does so farther on, but which is necessarily implied. Not all suffering bears within it the seed of re-

in the Greek text, *suffer*, for we have Οι πενθοῦντες, which comes from πασχω, meaning *to suffer.*

joicing, but only the suffering that is endured for truth, justice, and the love of God.

Here below all suffer, each in his own way and measure; but no one is exempt from the tremendous law of sorrow. All suffer, the good and the bad, Antiochus and the Machabees, the Roman emperors and the apostles and Christian martyrs, the enemies of the Church and the Church herself, the slaves of the world and the children of God. May we, then, say equally of all these: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted?" By no means, my friends; they alone are blessed who mourn and suffer for justice sake and for God; who, having the Faith, by the Faith and in the Faith keep before their minds the hope of the blessings of the life to come, which are the fruit and the recompense of present suffering. They alone are blessed who suffer courageously, with resignation and an humble heart, looking only to God for their reward. The true and only solace of those who weep and mourn under the burden of present ills is the promise of Jesus Christ, which will bring joy in the measure of the trials endured, provided we suffer as He wills and as much as He wills. Take away this most certain hope, founded on the promise of Christ; close the heavens above the heads of men and abolish a life beyond the grave, a second life, and the

earth will be changed into a vast place of torment and into an appalling prison, since then all would suffer without hope and suicide would be a wise relief. Those, then, are doing a cruel and a wicked work, who are striving to rob the people of their faith and with their faith of the hope of a life of joy in heaven. Such men, in as far as they can, drive the people to desperation, and their course would make necessary and would justify the most execrable crimes. All of us, then, when we suffer here on earth should raise our minds and hearts to heaven and cling fast, as to an anchor, to the promise of Christ: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Let us go on to the fourth article of our divine code: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill."

Justice! Who does not love justice? Who does not advocate it? Not a single man will be found on this earth who does not profess that he observes justice exactly, and, if need be, he is a stout defender of it, as long, that is, as he speaks of it generically and in theory, but when from the theoretical and the ideal he comes down to practice and plain matter of fact, it is quite different.

What, then, is justice? The word "justice" may signify the cardinal and fundamental virtue of giving to every one what is due him; it may

also mean a certain equity and benevolence of mind that inclines to kindliness; or again, it may be taken as implying the assemblage of all virtues. And in truth very often in Holy Writ *justice* is used as equivalent to *sanctity,* and a just man means a *perfect* man, a *saint,* and I believe that justice is used precisely in this sense by Our Lord in this passage: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice;" that is: "Blessed are all they that hunger and thirst, not for meat and drink, not for the good things of this earth, but for virtue, and for holiness, which is the highest degree of virtue."

It is not without reason that Jesus employs this energetic form of speaking: *"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice."* He does not say: "Blessed are they that desire justice, that love it, seek it, incline toward it, and will it; but blessed are they that hunger and thirst after it, in order thus to express the yearning and ardor with which we ought to wish and pursue virtue and holiness." Our desire should not be one of those that remain sterile and that may be likened to those dazzling flowers, beautiful to look upon, that fall to the ground leaving no fruit behind. Ours should not be one of those feeble wills that fail at the first difficulty; that will and do not will; that are ready to ascend Thabor but balk at Calvary; that wish to

have the roses but not the thorns; that are partial to virtues that demand no sacrifice and love to pursue a smooth path strewn with flowers. "No," says Christ, "we must hunger and thirst after justice." Look at a famished man in the presence of a well-supplied table, or a thirsty man on the brink of a fresh running stream. They lose no time; as soon as the one sees that table filled with abundant food he forthwith rushes upon it and eats ravenously of the dishes to appease the hunger that torments him; and as soon as the other sees the stream at his feet, he at once puts his parched lips to it to quench the thirst that consumes him. How the one devours the bread and meat, how the other gulps down the water! How they sate themselves and enjoy the food and drink! The pleasure they feel is radiant in the countenance and sparkles in the eye, and it is clear that they have no further wish or desire; they are sated and content. Virtue is the banquet of the famished, the running rivulet of the thirsty, and, as St. Augustine says, our entire life should be but one ceaseless and longing desire, one supreme effort, to still the rage of hunger at that banquet, to quench our burning thirst at that spring of life, where our every desire will be satisfied.[1] It was of this meat and drink that Jesus spoke

[1] Tota vita boni Christiani sanctum desiderium est (Tract iv. in Epist. S. Joannis).

at the Last Supper, when He said to the apostles: "I dispose to you as the Father hath disposed to Me, that you may eat and drink at My table, in My kingdom."[1] But we should never forget that the real reward of this burning love of justice is not to be sought here on earth, but rather in heaven: *"For they shall have their fill,"* in heaven, where we shall not thirst forever, as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman.

And now for the fifth Beatitude: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

In the first Beatitude Christ extirpates the accursed root of covetousness, which separates man from man and puts enmities between them; in the fifth He exhorts them to mingle together in a voluntary and holy equality; after justice comes mercy. Man desires to keep rather than to give, and he even casts a covetous eye upon the property of others. Justice marks the limits of rights and duties, mercy enlarges these limits in favor of the poor, and Christ Himself uttered these sublime words: "It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive";[2] "Blessed are the merciful."

Mercy, as the Latin word *"misericordia"* implies, means to feel in our hearts for the misery of others, to suffer with those who suffer, and to make our own the misfortunes of others; and as

[1] Luke xxii. 29–30. [2] Acts xx. 35.

every one who suffers pain in his own person sets himself at once to remove it, so also feeling in himself the pain of others it is but natural that he should do what he can to free himself from it, and hence mercy is the mother of beneficence and an incentive to all works of charity, the chief of which is almsgiving.

"Blessed are the merciful," that is, blessed are they that have a good, tender heart, full of compassion for the suffering. But this is not enough. How are we to show ourselves compassionate in aiding our suffering brethren, each according to his ability and his condition in life? Are they ignorant? Instruct them, or see that they are instructed. Are they wicked and perverse? Bear with them and correct them as a brother might a brother. Are they tiresome? Tolerate them. Are they inconstant and irresolute? Advise them. Are they sick? Visit and aid them. Are they persecuted by the powerful? Defend them. Are they hungry? Give them to eat. Are they naked and in rags? Clothe them. Such are the works of mercy that Jesus Christ enumerates, as recorded in another passage of the Gospel.

And what are the motives that are to inspire these works of mercy? Not a single one of those that are mostly fashionable in the world to-day, human motives, that are as various as men are numerous. The only one that is given is this:

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." And from whom? Evidently from God, the Father of mercies, who regards as done to Himself what is done to one of His least, and who rewards an hundred-fold.

What is the motive? To obtain for oneself the mercy one shows toward his brother: *For they shall obtain mercy.* "See," says St. Augustine, "what the usurer does, he surely desires to give as little and get as much as possible. And do you do the same. Give little and get much. See how enormously your capital grows. Give of temporal things and receive of eternal, give of the goods of earth and receive of the goods of heaven." [1]

For the reward of your deeds of mercy you must look to God, who alone knows your works and who alone will always recompense you for them with ample usury. But is this saying that he, who is merciful to his brother, need expect no mercy from his fellow men? No, certainly not. On the contrary, we frequently, if not always, see those who are compassionate toward their kind here on earth receive mercy, either because virtue and goodness gain the hearts of even the wicked, or because God graciously rewards them

[1] Attende quid facit foenerator; minus vult dare certe et plus accipere: hoc fac et tu. Da modica, accipe magna. Vide quam late crescat foenus tuum. Da temporalia, accipe aeterna. Da terram, accipe coelum. (In Psal. 36.)

on earth to comfort them and to encourage the timid and the slack in well-doing.

Let us go on to the sixth Beatitude: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." When do we say that a thing is clean and pure? When it is without taint of adulteration or mixture of external matter. Water is pure and so also are gold and silver when they contain only water, gold and silver. Similarly the soul is pure and clean, and so also the heart (which is here, as in many other places in Holy Writ, taken for conscience, mind, and will) is pure and clean, when it is free from all guilt of sin and from wayward affections, which, like extraneous matter and blemishes, stain and disfigure it.[1]

My brethren, your minds should be like a clear calm sky; when you voluntarily welcome unbecoming thoughts and allow filthy images to gather there your sky becomes overcast and dark; then those culpable desires gather down in the bottom of your hearts and a storm breaks out; mind and heart are topsy-turvy and the whole being is in a ferment, as when a tempest breaks loose on the face of the earth. Then the heart, that is, the conscience, is no longer clean and the eye of the mind,

[1] Here by the phrase, *Clean of heart*, are meant souls cleansed of all sin, and in general of every culpable affection, and hence specifically, souls free from all sensual affections and blemishes. It is remarkable that the reward promised to such souls is not the kingdom of God, but the vision of God. Where? Of course in heaven, but in a special sense also on earth.

obscured by the mists that rise from the mire of the senses, no longer clearly discerns the light of truth. The mind, then, must be kept clear of these mists, the heart clean of those earthly and sensual affections in order that we may be always able to see the truth, and God, who is the fountain of all truth. "This Beatitude," says St. Leo, "is promised to the pure of heart, for a defiled eye can not see the rays of truth, and what gladdens a clean eye is a torment to one that is sick and defiled. Purge, then, and cleanse the eye of the mind from all shadow of the things of earth and from all uncleanness of sin, that the mental gaze may blissfully rejoice in the vision of God alone."[1] Blessed indeed are the pure of heart, those clean of all stain, and blessed above all are chaste souls, for the light of truth will fall upon them as upon polished mirrors and by them be reflected back and rise up to God, from whom all truth comes.

And the seventh Beatitude is this: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."[2] Here we must note the

[1] Merito haec beatitudo cordis promittitur puritati: splendorem enim veri luminis sordens acies videre non poterit et quod erit iucunditas mentibus nitidis, hoc erit poena maculosis. Declinentur igitur terrenarum calignis vanitatum et ab omni squalore iniquitatis oculi tergantur interiores, ut serenus intuitus tantum Dei visione pascatur. (Fest. Omn. SS.)

[2] The word *vocabuntur*, "shall be called," is a Hebrew form of

Greek word εἰρηνοποιοί, which does not properly mean those who love peace and live in peace, but those who work for peace, pacificators and *makers* of peace among others, even at the risk of forfeiting their own peace.

Peace is the tranquillity of order, and since God is order itself, and the Cause that produces all stable order throughout all creation by laws fixed by Himself, He is therefore the principle of peace and peace itself: *The God of peace, He is our peace.* And hence they who have peace and preserve it in themselves, and much more they who promote it among others, and, if broken by ignorance or malice, exert themselves to re-establish it, are like unto God and are worthy the honor of being called the children of God: *"They shall be called the children of God."*

It is sad but true to say that this tranquillity of order, this true peace, rarely finds a home on earth. As winds and storms disturb the atmosphere, so do the passions of individuals and families, of societies and nations, break the peace of individuals, families, societies, and nations, and lead on to war.[1]

speech equivalent to "*shall be*"; "to say," or "to call," etc., with the Hebrews is equivalent to *to be*, for with God *to say* and *to call* is *to do*.

[1] There are individual, social, and national passions, always the offspring of pride, which may be individual, social, or national. Wars, which are unjust on one side or on the other, and

The enemy of all peace, the first rebel against God, broke the peace between God and man; the Son of God, made man, re-established this peace, and hence He is called *the prince of peace.* So also those who labor to suppress passions, those perpetual disturbers of order, and to restore peace among individuals and families, societies and peoples, are pacificators, peacemakers, and share in the mission of Jesus Christ Himself.

And now we have reached the eighth Beatitude: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Can it be possible, then, that men will hate and persecute virtue among themselves? I do not believe it. As no one will be found who will say that he hates truth, so I think no one can be found who will say that he hates and will persecute virtue and justice, which are but truth reduced to practice. On the other hand virtue and holiness are in themselves something abstract, which can neither be seen nor touched, and hence it is impossible either to combat or persecute them. They can only be hated and persecuted in the concrete and when reduced to practice, and, if I may so say, when they take on flesh and blood,

sometimes on both, ought, in our age to be regarded as the consequences of national pride, as in former ages they were the consequences of individual or dynastic pride.

and are thus made to oppose our passions and to be regarded by us as our enemies.

The truths, both theoretical and practical, which Christ brought on earth, were, if the expression may be allowed, impersonated in Him, then in the apostles, and then in the Church, and so they will be until the end of time. The divine Word, who is substantial truth, assumed human nature and united it to Himself in such way that with it He is but one Person; the truth taught by Him is united to the Church and inseparable from her; the Church is as it were the body of the truth and the truth is her soul, and, as it is impossible in any way to communicate with the soul except through the body, so also we can not lay hold on the truth, and, through truth, on the life of Christ, except through the Church. But man has passions, and how formidable they are! And as light is an enemy of darkness and death an enemy of life, so are the passions enemies of truth. Pride, covetousness, gluttony, lust, wrath, and envy hate and necessarily make war on humility, obedience, faith, charity, temperance, continence, and mortification, on all the virtues that form the substance of the teaching of Christ and of His Church. The struggle between Christ and His Church on the one hand and on the other the world and its followers is

in the nature of things necessary and inevitable. It began in heaven between the loyal and the rebel angels; it was through the agency of the latter continued on earth; it has filled space and time, and will end only on the day when Christ, through His Church, will have gained a complete victory.

This is why He foretold to the apostles and to all His followers that they would be persecuted.

It should not be thought, as some seem to think, that the prediction of Christ referred only to the early ages of the Church. His words embrace the entire life of the Church, which is a continuation of His own. There is no reason to be found anywhere and no hint in Sacred Writ, to lead us to believe that this state of warfare should be limited to the first ages of the Church, and all history bears witness that such is not a fact: "If they have persecuted Me they will persecute you"; and St. Paul says: "All that will live godly shall suffer persecution." "Let them be glad and rejoice," Christ adds; "they suffer for truth and justice and they will have their reward." What reward? Ever the same: "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What more splendid reward or more to be coveted!

And here Jesus Christ, as if carried away by a holy enthusiasm, changes His mode of speech,

adding to it new strength and fresh energy. Up to this point He had spoken in the third person, calmly and sublimely as befitted a divine lawgiver; now He addresses His words directly to His apostles, and, in the language of a supreme commander haranguing his soldiers before a great battle says: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you for My sake." He does not say: "Blessed are ye because you will be respected, listened to, and obeyed as the teachers of truth, because you will be loaded with wealth and honors and your name will be on every tongue, but because you will be reviled and calumniated and persecuted for My name's sake and for being the champions of truth and justice." I seek in vain through all history, ancient and modern, for another instance of language such as this addressed to poor fishermen and to the sons of toil.

But this is not all. "Be glad and rejoice," Christ goes on in a holy transport, "at the very thought of suffering infamy, calumny, and torment. Be glad and rejoice;" that is, "your joy will be beyond all reckoning." And the apostles some years later verified the prediction, as St. Luke tells us; for being publicly scourged, "They went forth from the presence of the council *rejoicing* that they were accounted

worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."[1] It was also verified in the simple faithful of Jerusalem, who, as St. Paul says, "Took with *joy* the being stripped of their goods."[2] Generous souls may indeed bear calumny, injuries, and loss of fortune, may even endure torments and brave death with resignation and equanimity, but to suffer all this with joy and exultation requires that souls be cast in heroic mold and be more divine than human.

But in spite of the fact that man may be magnanimous, ennobled, and changed by grace, Jesus Christ did not forget that he can not wholly lose sight of self and of his own welfare, or, in other words, that he is human. And hence to the words: "Be glad and rejoice when you suffer persecution for justice sake and when evil is spoken against you untruly for My sake," He adds: "For your reward is very great in heaven." You are made for happiness and for happiness that will never end; suffering and sorrow are inevitable, it is true, but they are not an end, but a means to an end or to happiness, and as a means they are to be desired and are beneficial, and therefore, regarding suffering and sorrow as a means to felicity, you will rejoice in them.

My friends, I have finished the brief com-

[1] Acts v. 41. [2] Heb. x. 34.

mentary on the eight articles of the fundamental divine constitution, that Christ has given for the government of human society, that is unchangeable over all the earth, that is intended for all men and for all time.

One last observation, to which I wish to call your attention.

How many lawgivers there have been in the past and how many there will be in the future, who in giving laws have had but two objects in view; namely, to lessen the evils and sorrows of men and to procure, increase, and make stable their possessions and blessings, and thus lead them on to such happiness as is possible here below. But the scope of their work is necessarily circumscribed and limited to the present time, to material means, and to a happiness that is temporary and relative, that can, if you like, reach the greater number, but that can not reach all and each individually, for very often what brings happiness to some, brings evil to others. No human legislation ever devised by man, no matter how perfect, can make all and each of those who accept it completely happy. Jesus Christ, because He is God-Man, wishes that all men, not a single one excepted, shall be truly and perfectly happy, always and everywhere. And what are the means He employs? Not material force, but moral; not a compulsory

and equal division of property and goods, which would be impossible and unjust, and if done to-day would be undone to-morrow, and would still leave the passions in the hearts of men just what they were before, nay, would still more aggravate and inflame them and sow deep the deadly seeds of all evils; instead of all this He promulgates the great law forbidding man to love inordinately worldly goods, that men lust after, and inculcating upon all zeal for justice, purity of heart, unity of spirit, reciprocal love, charity in word and deed, and resignation in enduring privations, pains, and sorrows, and to all who observe this incomparable code He promises an unfailing and adequate recompense in the life beyond the grave. In this way Jesus Christ solves the social problem and makes tolerable and precious the present life by making it a means and an instrument to secure an incomparably better life in time to come. If the hopes of man are restricted to the present time, they will rush like wolves, maddened by the rage of hunger, upon the scanty repast afforded by the natural things of this world and tear and rend one another; but if they are told that after the present life there is another, in which the irregularities and injustices of this will be repaired and redressed; where he, who has here below been lavish in his charities to his brother, will have his ample re-

ward forever, and where this struggle between man and man will cease, then all eyes and hearts will be raised on high and the hope of endless joy in a future life will soften and make tolerable the ills and sorrows of this. Heaven, my friends, is in one pan of the balance and earth in the other; take heaven out of one pan and the other will go down into the abyss. The continuous and supreme need of the human family is the sound of the voice of Christ, crying out: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."

DISCOURSE II

The Feast of All Saints the Feast of the Triumph of Christ

At least once in the course of the year the rulers of this earth review their forces by land and sea. Then may be seen numerous battalions of infantry drawn up in battle array, headed by their officers; with banners flying and arms gleaming in the light of the sun they march with marvelous order and precision past their rulers, who are surrounded by generals, ministers, and high dignitaries, their breasts decorated with medals of honor and their uniforms resplendent with trappings of silver and gold. Following the infantry are seen long lines of wagons and cannon, traversing amid deafening and ominous sounds the principal thoroughfares of cities, deploying over vast plains, and, at a single signal, at the sound of a trumpet, coming together in enormous masses, again dispersing into small bands, now halting, now running at double-quick, now facing about, now going through countless intricate evolutions with incredible rapidity and exactness, amid the frantic applause and to the amazement of the crowd that has come up from distant towns and cities to enjoy that magnificent spectacle of strength, discipline, and order.

And at sea is to be seen a spectacle no less imposing. Floating on the waters are citadels decorated with flags and bunting, sheathed with powerful plates of steel and fitted out with turrets and terrible machines of war and instruments of death and destruction, and all as easily managed as a bark; seemingly intelligent they go off to the right and the left at the slightest signal; they puff and pant like enormous monsters of the deep; they have tempests shut up within their giant flanks, and they belch forth shot more destructive than the thunderbolts of heaven. All this is a sight that inspires the mind with awe, fills it with wonder, and calls forth resounding shouts from the spectators, who feel proud of their strength and secure in the possession of their liberty and independence.

And so also, my friends, does Jesus Christ, the King of all ages, who has received from His Father all the nations of the earth as a heritage, once in the year, by means of the Church, which represents Him, display before the eyes of our faith the spectacle of His strength and power. To-day Jesus Christ, the King of kings, seated upon His inaccessible throne and surrounded by myriads of angels, causes to pass before us those numberless phalanxes of brave soldiers who, having fought by His side in thousands and thousands of battles and gloriously conquered, now reign

triumphantly with Him in heaven. Hence we may to-day see with the eyes of faith those invincible hosts passing at the foot of Christ's throne; we may see passing before Him the company of the apostles, the leaders of that celestial army, and behind them marching in due precedence and with flying banners the patriarchs and prophets, the army of martyrs, purpled with their own blood and waving glorious palms in their hands, the lines of bishops and confessors, the choirs of white-robed virgins, singing their everlasting song to the Lamb, and then that countless multitude of saints, seen by St. John: *"I saw a great multitude which no man could number."* All these heroes are brandishing the arms with which they conquered the world, the flesh, and the devil, namely, faith, hope, and charity, and binding about their brows the crown wherewith God Himself has crowned them and showing the wounds they received in the conflict, that are now more lustrous than rubies and diamonds.

What after all are the armies of the most warlike powers of the world as compared with the armies of the saints, the true heroes of Christ, whom the Church to-day calls upon us to admire? They fade away as stars before the glory of the rising sun. The soldiers of the earth have defeated or may defeat earthly enemies and storm formidable strongholds, but the soldiers of Christ

have overcome armies and taken strongholds of quite a different kind; they have conquered the world and hell, they have stormed the fortresses of heaven. Wherever the armies of earth pass they leave carnage and death in their wake; the armies of Christ in passing leave behind them the fragrance of their virtues and the benedictions of a grateful people. The armies of the world to-day are and to-morrow are not, as the world well knows by experience; the armies of Christ are immortal. The armies of the kings of earth number some hundreds of thousands, millions if you like; the armies of Christ are beyond all count, and go on increasing day by day: "*I saw a great multitude which no man could number.*" What thoughts should come into our minds on seeing this spectacle of the power and the triumph of Christ? What lessons does it teach us?

On seeing interminable files of soldiers passing before their king the people in their pride and exultation cry out: "How great he is and powerful!"

And we on seeing the armies of Christ and witnessing their triumphs with still greater reason cry out: "How great and powerful is our king, Jesus Christ! He is indeed the very wisdom and power of God."

The people in looking upon their armies feel that they are strong, that they may defy the as-

saults of an enemy, and that they may confidently look forward to an era of peace. And we looking upon the endless phalanxes of Christ may feel that we, too, are strong in the strength of His name; that we are ready to emulate those soldiers in holy warfare, and that we are certain to triumph over our enemies. These are the two lessons which we should learn from the feast of this day.

In all lands and in every age the genius of man has given the most splendid proofs of his creative power; everywhere we see the traces of his passing. If we fix our eyes on the heavens, we see that the genius of man has explored in great part its mysterious regions and can tell us marvels of the sun and planets, of stars and their unvarying laws. If we interrogate the earth it will tell us that the genius of man has penetrated into its recesses, has studied its obscure depths, and forced it to yield up its treasure. If we look out upon the sea it will tell us that the genius of man has mastered its proud waves and rides its tempestuous billows as rapidly and securely as the birds fly through the boundless spaces of the air, and that he has searched its depths.

What has the genius of man not accomplished, what is it not daily accomplishing under our eyes? It has accomplished great things, marvelous and incredible, and day by day with the torch in its

hand it advances farther and farther into the dark kingdom of nature and, like a tireless conqueror, widens the confines of its empire and pushes back the boundaries of the mysterious, until we are tempted to fall upon our knees before it and exclaim: "How great thou art! Thou canst do all things!"

But, my friends, there is one work, one conquest before which the most powerful and daring genius must confess that he is powerless. There is one undertaking which neither the power of all earthly monarchs combined, nor the wisdom of all the learned, nor the wealth of all the opulent, nor any human force, has at any time been able to carry on to success. And what undertaking is this that is impossible to all the forces of men? It is sanctity—the making of men holy.

The wise may make others wise, the rich may make others rich, the powerful may make others powerful, men of genius may change the face of the earth, painters and sculptors, masters in their craft, may vie with nature in reproducing nature's beauties, and make the marble speak and the canvas breathe, but neither monarch nor conqueror, neither painter nor sculptor, no man, no matter what his genius, can offer to the world the spectacle of a saint, can infuse into any son of Adam virtue in its supremest stage, or sanctity. Some philosophers have been able to form honest

men, but not saints, and sanctity is quite different from being simply honest.

And how could it be otherwise? Sanctity is something heavenly and divine, not earthly and human; and how could man give what is heavenly and divine to his fellow men? To do so he would be obliged to give what he has not. As man is impotent to create truth, which is not a birth of earth but comes down from on high, so is he impotent to create sanctity, which is not of earth but of heaven. Sanctity means to be superior to self; it means the gaining of a complete victory over the passions; it means really and continuously to despise oneself and the things of this world, so that we prefer poverty to riches, humiliations to honors, pains to pleasure; it means so to love our brother that we will do good to him when he reviles and persecutes us; it means to love God and to be ready to sacrifice for His sake all things, even ourselves; in short it means to make ourselves like unto God, to be His living images, and, to use the language of Holy Writ, to be transformed into Him. Now, my friends, do you think that man with all his science and industry, with all the forces at his disposal can, not only have a knowledge of all this, but can accomplish it all, not once or twice, but continuously and in every case; and, what is incomparably more, can put this dominating will into men and

women of every age, condition, and country, and can do it so effectually that these in their turn can communicate this superhuman energy to others? No, my friends, never. Men highly gifted, of great learning and wide experience, endowed with noble sentiments and of sanguine temperament, men like Socrates, have been able to give wonderful precepts for the guidance of life and form and gather about them a small school of upright men, but they have never been able to have these precepts carried into effect and to create a nation of saints. I have heard an ignorant man say to a learned: "Teach me;" a sick man say to a physician: "Heal me;" a victim of vice say to a friend: "Help me to conquer this vice and to become virtuous;" but I have never heard one man say to another: "Make me a saint —give me sanctity." We know our own strength too well and that of our fellow men to hesitate for an instant to avow that man of himself can not become a saint, and much less can he make others saints.

And yet there was once a Man on earth, who not only knew what sanctity is, but was Himself an ineffable illustration of it; not only did He illustrate it in Himself, but He communicated it to others; He created and still creates daily true and perfect saints without number. And who is this man? Ask the army of saints who are now

in triumph in heaven and whom we on earth honor to-day, and they will answer with one voice: "He who alone has created and still creates saints; behold Him, Jesus Christ, true God and true man."

What the whole human race attempted in vain for centuries; what the wise with their learning, the rich with their wealth, monarchs with their power and geniuses with their creations could not do, that He did and still does, who is God and was crucified on Calvary. He alone, weak, despised, rejected by His own, and reduced to the extreme of impotency on the cross, makes the impure chaste, the intemperate abstemious, the covetous open-handed, the irascible meek, the proud humble, the timid courageous, the unjust just, the slothful laborious, and enemies brothers. He changes corrupt men into virtuous, and wicked men into saints. He puts a new heart into them and a new will; He transforms them, as St. Paul would say, into new creatures, more divine than human.

It is related of Pompey, a Pagan general of old, that when some one remarked that he had imprudently left himself without an army to oppose his rival and enemy, Cæsar, then hastening by forced marches to Rome, he replied: "I have only to stamp the earth with my foot and armies will rise up." These words, which were but an empty and ridiculous brag in his mouth, as events

soon proved, are simple and naked truth in the mouth of Jesus. He could truly say: "Wherever I put My foot and set up the cross, that is, wherever I am known and loved, armies rise up, not of soldiers, but of heroes of virtue, armies of saints, who will gladly suffer and die for Me and for My teaching."

And what armies of heroes and saints He has called into being! They people not heaven alone but of them may be said, as was said of the seed of Abraham, that they outnumber the stars in the heavens and the sands on the seashore: *"I saw a great multitude that no man could number."*

Men skilled in the military art tell us that to create a great army and bring it under severe discipline, even with all the resources at man's disposal, is an ardous undertaking and requires much time. Jesus Christ has called into existence a perfect and immense army, has subjected it to the sternest discipline of the Cross, has created it in the shortest time, has preserved it through all the ages, and He enlarges it from day to day as time goes on. Add to this that Christ has formed this great army of the representatives of all nations and peoples, differing one from the other in character and habits, in beliefs and civilization, so that among His soldiers may be found men of every clime and tongue and of every age, men from East and West, from North and South, men

who came out from Hebraism and Paganism, from the camp and from the workshop. Even the savages of America and Australia joyfully obeyed His voice, and touched by His vivifying breath flowers the most dazzling and sweet with the perfume of sanctity bloomed in lands the most inhospitable.

Among the saints of Christ may be seen men of every condition, men venerable with age beside young men in the flower of their years, the poor side by side with the rich, the ignorant mingled with the learned, the noble with the plebeian, churchmen with men of the world, the sons of kings with the sons of the people. There is not a profession, not an art, no matter how noble, not a craft no matter how humble and lowly, that has not its representatives in the army of Christ and can not point out there a long line of those who on earth were distinguished in its pursuits. Kings will point to the Louises of France, the Edwards of England, and the Henrys of Germany, to the Ferdinands of Spain, the Stephens of Hungary, and the Canutes of Denmark; soldiers will name the Georges and the Maurices, the Alexanders and the mighty Theban legion; philosophers glory in the Justins and the Augustines, the Thomases, the Anselms and hundreds of others; physicians will name the Lukes and the Pantaleons; among those who came from the quiet

country the Philips, the Theodores, and the Vincents are known to all; among the virgins the names of the Agneses, the Cecilias, the Catherines, and the Agathas are celebrated in song and prose, while among the widows there are the no less famous names of the Hedwigs, the Jean de Chantals, and the Bridgets. Thus Jesus Christ drew His soldiers and saints from every rank and walk of life, from every calling and craft of society, in order thus to show that to Him all things are possible and that He could of the very stones raise up children to Abraham, and further, in order that no one could allege his social condition as an excuse if he failed to make himself a saint. Neither painter nor sculptor can make of every one of his pupils a great painter or a skilful sculptor, for where natural talent and capacity are wanting even the best of masters will labor in vain. But Jesus Christ has formed His most perfect imitators in an art, that of sanctity, of all arts the most difficult, of men who came, some from the thrones of kings and others from the workshop, from the palaces of nobles, from the hut of the peasant, from courts and camps, and all these and with equal facility He made saints. Surely His was a wisdom and a power truly divine! And note, my friends, that Jesus Christ so formed His saints that each of them should bear upon him, if the expression may be

allowed, His own personal physiognomy, so that all were perfect saints, each in his own way and in varying degree, thus producing a most beautiful and marvelous variety.

Can a single man be found who in facial feature, in voice, in personal conformation, in moral and intellectual aptitudes is perfectly like any other? No, assuredly not. There will be found a greater or less resemblance but never a perfect likeness. And why? Because the Creator in this amazing variety of form and character wished to show forth His inexhaustible fertility of resource. And so also in the saints, the creation of the Man-God; all are perfect, but no two are in every respect alike. Their virtue and sanctity, like the human countenance and the colors of the prism, in their infinite gradation and delicate blendings are differentiated in a thousand details. It is wonderful! The most eloquent orator, the most brilliant poet, the most profound philosopher, the most accomplished musician, the most clever artist will in the long run exhaust the vein of his genius and in his productions the same ideas will reappear and the same thoughts will recur again and again; but the saints, the productions of Christ, although numerous beyond all count, are all most perfect and all most distinct and infinite in variety. His richness never decreases, His copiousness never dries up, His fertility is never

exhausted; it is like the light of the sun that neither decreases nor diminishes.

Jesus Christ, then, is not a *man,* for man with time grows old and his creative powers are exhausted and wholly fail.

As in the immense variety of creation we recognize the infinite power and greatness of God, the Creator, so in the immense variety of saints we recognize the divine power of Christ, the Sanctifier.

Now how and by what means did this poor Galilean create the countless hosts of His glorious army, which to-day passes in review before our eyes? Men of greatest name and learning have with difficulty gathered about them a few dozen disciples and founded a school, which most frequently closed as soon as they were laid away in the tomb, or, if it continued to exist, presented the melancholy spectacle of divisions without number. Nations have with difficulty, in spite of all their wealth and resources, organized armies and fitted out navies. But look at Jesus Christ; He has no wealth, nor does He care to have any, and He even bade His disciples to relinquish it; His name is not famed among the powerful, who might aid Him, nor does He strive to gain them; all His resources are reduced to His *word,* which He commits to a few men as poor as Himself, the *word* that St. Paul says is

foolishness to them that perish; to a few mysterious rites, or sacraments, through which is conveyed an invisible grace, that penetrates and transforms hearts; and finally to the cross, to patience, sorrow, and implacable war on all the passions and on the world, which He wishes to overcome. And with such means as these Jesus Christ has been able to sanctify millions of men and entire generations.

He said to men simply, quietly, and without any parade: "Believe what I tell you of God and of a life to come, even though you can not comprehend it;" and they believed, and so strong was their belief that they willingly laid down their lives rather than admit into their heart the least shadow of a doubt. He said to them, "Be chaste," and they became chaste; "Be humble," and they were humble; "Be as simple and sincere as children," and they were simple and sincere as children; "Blessed are the clean of heart," and solitudes and cloisters were populous with virgins. He said: "If ye will be perfect give all you have to the poor and come and follow Me," and thousands of generous souls abandoned the world and all it had to offer and voluntarily became poor as He was poor, who had not whereon to lay His head. He said: "Love one another as children of the same Father in heaven," and they loved one another as brothers;

He said: "For love of the truth, for love of and in defence of My teaching, if necessary, pour out your blood and die in the midst of the most atrocious torments," and millions of men and women gladly suffered and died amid the agonies of the most barbarous martyrdoms with His name upon their lips. My friends, if such a change in the minds and hearts of men, effected by such simple means as these, is not the work of God, then I know not what other can be.

But do you know what it means to change the minds and hearts of men? It is easier for God to transport mountains from place to place, to divert the course of rivers, to overturn the universe, than to change the minds and hearts of men. Nothing is clearer. Mountains, rivers, and the universe, being destitute of reason, can not offer any resistance, whereas man, because he is endowed with reason, can and often does offer a stubborn resistance. If, then, the spectacle of creation, the regular succession of its great phenomena, reveal even to the deaf and blind the power and the glory of God, so does the spectacle of the countless multitudes of saints, of this stupendous change of minds and hearts, reveal the divine power and glory of Christ, God, the Redeemer and Sanctifier.

But this is not all. A master may form disciples and a monarch may create armies, but

neither can go on doing so for all time. Let me explain. Could a learned man, who lived some thousand years ago and founded a school preserve it and keep his disciples faithful to his principles and teachings? Could Cæsar, for instance, or any other great captain or emperor, who is now but dust, raise up an army and lead it? Did he live at this day he might be able to do so by his presence, by his look, by the impelling power of his iron will, and by the fascination of his voice, but once separated from us by the interval of even a century and reposing in the silence of the tomb, he is powerless. But Christ, though He lived on this earth nineteen centuries ago, though He is neither seen nor heard, daily forms numbers of disciples and draws to Himself numbers of men who serve Him and love Him, who suffer and die for His sake. Christ forms daily and in every clime new saints who meet and provide for the exigencies of their age as they arise. When was ever a like prodigy seen? A man dead for centuries creates an army of soldiers and leads them on to trying battles of virtue and to the conquest of sanctity!

Impressed by this truth a man of genius, if there ever was one, and also a great transgressor, then powerless and on the brink of the grave, having learned wisdom from misfortune equal to his greatness, uttered these words: "I have

reigned and my reign was as splendid and glorious as that of any who ever wore a crown. I have filled multitudes with enthusiasm and I have seen thousands at my beck rush into a storm of bullets. I have obtained prodigies of valor, but to accomplish these marvels my personal presence was required, the look of my eye, my voice, and that something, I know not what, which I possess, which I can not myself understand, and which none of my generals have succeeded in learning from me. But now that I am a prisoner on this barren rock, far from France, who still thinks of me? Who loves me? Who obeys me? Who endures hardships for me, who fights for me, who conquers a throne for me? Who has remained loyal to me? A few it may be, but as for the rest I am abandoned. See to what a pass I am come. In a little while I shall be forgotten and my deeds will furnish work for the pedant's lash and subjects for rhetorical dissertations. And yet I am still living, and they still live who saw me, who partook of my bounty and loved me! What a contrast between Christ and me! What a chasm divides us! He though dead still lives and reigns in the hearts of His faithful; and I, still living, am already dead to the love of mine. He is God; I am but dust!'' These thoughts, so masculine, true and evident, coming from the lips of that giant among kings, *upon whom the Spirit*

Creator stamped a footprint so large, need no comment.[1] Hence we may conclude that the creation of sanctity upon this earth, a creation due solely to Christ, and of a sanctity so sublime, infused into so many millions of men, differing in languages, usages, and culture, infused, too, without human means, and in all ages, even those most remote from Him, who is no longer heard nor seen, a sanctity that answers to the needs of all times, is indeed the work of God alone, and falling at the feet of the crucified God, the perennial Creator of all sanctity, and mingling our voices with those of the interminable army of saints who surround His throne, we will cry out: "Thou alone art holy! Thou alone art Lord! Thou alone art the Most High, O Jesus Christ! Thou alone art the Son of the living God!"

Sanctity is something so high that no one can by his own powers alone think of acquiring it, and hence it is written: "*None is good but God alone,*" which means that no one is holy but God, or those whom God makes holy. And in fact how can man, who is born a slave to sin and to the most obstinate and wicked passions, of himself shake off their yoke? "*Who,*" says Job, "*can make him clean, that is conceived of unclean seed?*

[1] Here reference is made to a conversation that Napoleon had on the island of St. Helena with his companions in exile and which is related by Augustus Nicolas in his "Philosophical Studies in Christianity."

Thou alone, O Lord, who alone art, and can do all things.''

When man turns his eyes in upon himself and candidly interrogates his conscience; when he sees and feels his own weakness and ignorance on the one hand, and on the other realizes the heights of sanctity and virtue, he will with St. Augustine cry out: ''Sanctity is indeed beautiful and divine, and how can I, who am fettered by passion and seduced by a lawless love of creatures, hope to acquire it?'' And I seem to hear each of you saying: ''How can I, a sinner, attain to sanctity? I who am distracted by a thousand cares? I, who must toil day and night? I, who cannot subdue the passions that are a torment to me? I, who am so weak under their assaults? I, who live in the bustle of the world?''

Those, who speak thus, should not lose heart; let them lift their eyes on high, and say to themselves what St. Augustine said to himself: ''See how many, clothed with the same nature as thyself, weak and tempted as thou art, and more than thou, have nevertheless become saints. Behold the company of apostles; behold the legions of martyrs, who won the palms of victory with the price of their blood and by suffering unspeakable pains and torments; behold the virgins, who passed through this world without as much as leaving a stain upon the whiteness of their souls;

behold all that multitude of men and women, old and young, who are now reigning with Christ; if they have been able to reach the heights of sanctity, why canst not thou, '*Si isti et istae, cur non ego?*' " Were they not men? Were they not subject to the same trials, the same daily conflicts, that we are subject to? Were they under another law? Did they traverse in going to heaven another road than that which we must traverse? Or is the nature of man changed?

But you will say: "They were borne up and strengthened by grace; God lavished upon them His marvelous gifts, and they could run joyously along the paths of sanctity." So be it. But does God deny us His graces? Are the means wanting to us to obtain it and as copiously as we will? If we but give the matter a little thought, we shall see that God has been and is lavish of His graces to us and that we have abundant means of gaining it, and possibly more abundant than they possessed whom we see now on high clothed with light and glory. Can we not pray to-day, to-morrow, and always as they could? Are not the life-giving springs of the sacraments flowing now as they were then, and accessible to us as they were to them? Does not the word come in upon our ears now as it came in upon theirs? Are we obliged, as were many of the saints, our brothers now reigning in heaven, to resist even unto blood?

Again: Is it not a truth of faith that God wills all men to be saved? Did He not die for all? He can not, therefore, deny us the grace that He Himself purchased for us with His death. It is not, then, the grace of God we lack but the will to accept it and turn it to account, and if we are not saints, as are our brothers in bliss above, we can blame no one but ourselves.

No, my friends, the arm of Christ is not shortened and He can do to-day and every day what He did for those who have gone before us, and each of us, miserable as we are, may say with the apostle: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." The God who made Peter, a sinner and a perjurer, the Prince of the apostles and His first vicar; who changed Saul, a persecutor, into a vessel of election and the greatest of the apostles; who gave the martyrs strength to bear up under the sword of the executioner and when dying on the gibbet, and who sustained them when they were torn by the claws and teeth of wild beasts and burned at the stake, can strengthen our feebleness and renew in us the miracles wrought in His saints. When with the eyes of faith I look up and see that stupendous army of saints, now filled with transports of bliss in their possession of God and filling heaven with their triumphant song of joy, I feel myself filled with trust in Jesus Christ, from whom alone they

drew the heroic courage and fortitude which made them victors in the great and terrific conflicts for virtue's sake.

Led on by the great General, who in Himself and in His saints overcame the world, hell, the flesh, and its solicitations, whom shall we fear? We shall, I know, find our enemies and the enemies of Christ drawn up across the way that we must pass; they will assault us with their own arms, with deceit and snares, with pleasures and threats, and possibly with violence; but we shall not fear them, nor shall we slacken our pace. In the name of Jesus Christ we shall go forward fearlessly, we shall spurn the asp and the basilisk, we shall trample under foot the lion and the dragon. Where Christ is, there is victory, and He is ever with those who believe in Him, hope in Him, love Him, and serve Him. May we all one day, by God's favor, be the companions and brothers of those who have reached heaven, the country for which they yearned, and may we sing with them for all ages: "Blessed be the Lord who with His blood redeemed us out of every tribe and tongue, out of every nation and people, and who has made of us all one kingdom of God; for we, too, have conquered in the blood of the Lamb, to whom be honor and glory and benediction for all ages to come." Amen.

DISCOURSE III

The World and the Gospel

I do not believe there can be found in the Books of the New Testament a truth more clearly expressed and more frequently inculcated than this, that the teachings of Christ and the maxims of the world are diametrically opposed to each other. Jesus Christ says in the Gospel: "Blessed are the poor;" the world answers: "Blessed are the rich;" again Jesus Christ says: "Blessed are they that mourn;" and the world answers: "Blessed are they that laugh;" Jesus Christ says: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, that are reviled and against whom all manner of evil is spoken;" and the world answers: "Blessed are they that are honored and receive the applause of men;" Jesus Christ says that we must crucify our flesh and its concupiscences; the world answers that we must gratify all the desires of the flesh; once more, Jesus Christ says that it is better to give than to receive; the world answers that it is better to receive than to give; and I might go on making a much longer catalogue of truths concerning which Christ and the world are wholly opposed to each other. Possibly in no place in the Gospel has

Jesus Christ more briefly and clearly expressed this truth than in that in which He says: "You can not serve two masters. You can not serve God and Mammon." And hence between Christ and the world, between the disciples of Christ and the followers of the world, there has been waged an incessant and ferocious war that will not end until the end of time, when Christ and His disciples will be completely victorious over the world and its followers. This is the solemn prophecy that God pronounced at the very dawn of the story of the human race: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." The army of the saints, now triumphant in heaven, whose victory we celebrate this day, reminds us of this truth.

Still, my friends, when we look into the matter we shall find that there are points on which the Gospel of Christ and the maxims of the world are in perfect accord. And this is not to be wondered at, since error subsists only at the expense of truth, just as disease can only exist in a living body. Where there is no life there is no disease; and hence there is no error, no matter how enormous or manifest, that does not contain some grains of truth.

The feast of All Saints, which we celebrate today, reminds us that we all yearn for complete

happiness, this being both a need of our nature and the uttermost term of all religion.

I think I shall be doing what is useful and agreeable and what admirably harmonizes with the feast of the day if I show you: first, that there is one thing concerning which the Gospel and the world perfectly agree and speak as with one voice; next, that there is another thing concerning which the Gospel and the world absolutely disagree; third, and finally, that as regards this second point, the light of human reason alone tells us that the Gospel is clearly in the right and its teaching true. It will be my duty to show this, and yours to judge if I have made good my promise.

I have said that there is one thing concerning which the Gospel and the world perfectly agree and speak as with one voice. This agreement seems strange, not to say impossible, and yet it really exists. And what is this thing, my friends?

The omnipotent hand of the Creator has placed man upon this earth and watches over him. What is his end? Has God placed him here and does He watch over him that he may be happy or that he may be unhappy? What is his heritage? Is it sorrow? Is it joy? The answer to this question, as is clear, is of the highest importance and absolutely necessary for each and all of us. Why am I here on the earth? What is my goal, where is the

end of my journey? I turn to the world. Tell me, I say to it, am I created for weeping or for laughter, for pain or for pleasure, to be happy or to be unhappy? And the world answers: "Man is created to be happy; this is his right, nay his duty; and any one who contests this right, no matter who, is an enemy and a tyrant, to be set upon and thrust aside when he bars the way to happiness. This is man's right and duty."

I turn to the Gospel and put the same question: Why has God placed me upon this earth? What is the end of my existence? The answer is prompt and very simple. God has created you to be happy; this is your end and there can be no other.

As to this truth, then, the world and the Gospel agree perfectly, and moreover it is a truth that can not be gainsaid.

What does each and every man, everywhere and always, without a single exception, seek with all his powers and by every imaginable art and contrivance, without ever tiring? They seek two objects and they seek them always; they seek to avoid pain, or what they believe to be painful, and then to enjoy pleasure and to procure happiness, or what they believe to be happiness. Man's life may be described as a continuous struggle against pain, a continuous flight from

what may give pain, and a mad and precipitous rush toward whatever he considers to be a source of pleasure and happiness.

Let us enter into ourselves and question our conscience; let us search for the primary and true motives of our every thought and desire and act, of the whole chain of our acts, and we shall find that all of them may be reduced to these two, to escape pain and to procure happiness, of whatever kind it may be. And if we observe closely we shall clearly see that our struggle against pain is only an effort to remove obstacles that stand between us and happiness; and hence this struggle is but a movement in our progress toward happiness, so that we are justified in affirming that the one scope of all our strivings and of all our acts is the acquisition of happiness. What do the eyes ask? Light to see. What do the ears ask? Sound to hear. What do the lungs ask? Air to breathe. What does the mind ask? To be able to know truth. What does the heart ask? It asks for what is good, for joy and happiness. Deprive me of any of these and I have a faculty that has no corresponding object; I am a man who has eyes, but no light; hearing, but no sound to gladden it; lungs, but no air to breathe; I am suffocating; I am consumed with thirst and have not a drop of water to quench its

burning; I am faint with hunger and have not a morsel of bread; I am yearning for truth and can not find it.

This need of being happy is dominating me; I feel it; it never leaves me; it is a spur that is ever urging me forward; it is a torment to me. Can the earth, can the stars, do other than obey the sovereign law of attraction which draws them toward their center and holds them in their regular courses about it? All intelligent beings, all men, are so many stars that the longing for good, the inextinguishable desire for happiness, powerfully draws to itself and holds them in their courses, more or less regular, about it.

This need, or rather this force, that carries us forward, that urges us on to seek happiness, that is active in all living beings, in each according to its kind (and the more noble they are and the more the light of intelligence is resplendent in them, the more active it is), that lies at the very root of our being, that is, to use the strong expression of St. Augustine, its burden, whence does it come? Who preserves it? Its Author Himself, the God Creator; for this need or this force can not be parted from the soul, and our whole soul is ever moving toward and, if I may so say, centering in this feverish yearning to be happy.

True, my friends, this force, that is ever goad-

ing the soul onward in pursuit of happiness, very frequently leads it astray, turns it hither and thither; the soul may be said to be like the point of the magnetic needle, which oscillates to this side and that and yet is ever turned toward the pole. True at times it is not conscious of what it is doing; it is like the butterfly, gorgeous in color, that goes from flower to flower seeking nourishment and finding none; it seeks happiness at hazard and seeks it where it is not; still it is true that the soul is ever seeking it, eagerly craving it of earth and heaven, and, a thousand times disappointed, it returns a thousand times to the search in hope of finding it, and finding its satisfaction there.

All men are created to be happy; the world and the Gospel agree on this, and reason confirms it. But where? What means are to be used and when will they be happy? Here the world and the Gospel part company and there exists between them the greatest possible divergence.

I say to the world: "Where can I be happy? Where will this longing desire for happiness be satisfied?" And its answer is: "Here on earth." To imagine another life, to hope for happiness beyond the grave, is to the world a dream, a stupidity. It says that all ends with the grave, pain and sorrow, joy and happiness.

I say again to the world: "What means must I

make use of to be happy?" And its answer is: "The means and the good things that are here below, that lie round about us; of what use are goods that can not be seen? They are of no use, because there are none such; they are but the creations of weak minds, of desolate hearts, which from lack of goods that are real, goods that the eye can see, love to delude themselves with fantastic dreams of invisible goods."

"Happiness," the world goes on, "consists in the enjoyment of the goods of this earth; whoso possesses them is happy, and the more of them he possesses the happier he is; whoso is destitute of them is unhappy, and this is hell and the only hell."

"Riches procure conveniences and all comforts, magnificent palaces, splendid apparel, horses and carriages, sumptuous tables, villas and gardens, ease and security, dignities and honors, the praises and the applause of the world, all pleasures of mind and sense—everything may be had for gold. Hence the rich are happy, blessed are the rich." So says the world.

It is indeed true that there have been and there still are men of a certain elevation of mind and heart, who have scorned to place their happiness in a bit of lustrous metal and in vulgar pleasures, which follow naturally upon the possession of wealth. The happiness of man here on earth,

they said, is to be sought in the nobler and purer joys that virtue brings; virtue is its own reward and the virtuous man is happy.[1]

I ask the world again: "When may I hope to be happy?" The answer is clear from what has been said: "When I shall be rich and honored, when I shall hear within me that which is not difficult to hear, the voice of conscience saying: 'Thou art happy.'" The happiness of man, whatever it may be, is inexorably bounded by the duration, most brief at best, of this present life.

I turn to the Gospel and ask: "Where can I gain the happiness that is a need, a supreme craving of my heart?" It answers: "Not here on earth. The earth is a journey, not a goal; it is a place of trial, not the prize; a place of exile, not the fatherland; here is the sowing, elsewhere the reaping; here the struggle, elsewhere the triumph; here suffering, elsewhere joy. He deceives himself who thinks he can find here below true happiness, the happiness necessary to man, and if he thinks so, he by so doing loses the way that conducts him to it."

"Where then," I ask, "am I to find the happi-

[1] The Stoics of old placed their happiness in the joy that the practice of virtue brings. If words, rather than facts, are to be trusted this school numbered a few disciples, and it does so still, especially in France. It is a teaching reeking with pride, disavowed by human nature, belied by facts, and which gathers its disciples among a few self-sufficient men, who are victims of an idealism not easily distinguished from insanity.

ness that I crave?" It answers: "After this there is another, an endless life, that begins beyond the grave. Death is the beginning of true life; beyond this world there is another, and there, and there alone, must true happiness be sought."

"By what means," I ask, "am I to reach this happiness?" "By means," it answers, "totally different from those which the world proposes to its followers." The Gospel tells me on every page: "Do not love riches, for they will not bring you the happiness for which you yearn; on the contrary they will increase your cares, augment your trials, sow with thistles the paths you must traverse, and hem you about with thorns." Are you rich? It says: "Give of your riches, give of your abundance to the poor and suffering, and, in any event, keep your heart free from an ill-regulated love of riches; be their master, not their slave. Do you seek to know the means that will lead you on to the conquest of happiness? They are not comforts and luxuries, not sleep and a bed of sloth, not the pleasures of the palate and the pleasures of sense; but temperance, self-denial, a mastery of the passions, poverty of spirit, purity of heart, a contempt of the world and of self, humility, meekness, charity, forgiveness of injuries, the patient endurance of the sorrows of this life, the practice of all virtues, the fulfilling of all duties—these are the means that will bring

you happiness." In a word, the means the Gospel proposes to us for the acquisition of happiness are the direct opposite of those proposed by the world to its votaries. It is enough for us to know that Christ in the Gospel says to us: "Woe to the rich. Blessed are the poor. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are they that suffer." The teaching of the Gospel, then, as regards happiness is, whether as to place, time, or means, wholly contrary to that of the world. I know of no two things, nor can I conceive of any, more emphatically opposed to each other, than are the world and the Gospel; and I think you will agree with me.

And which of these teachers is right? On which side lies the truth? It is unnecessary to say; the truth can be only with the Gospel, and with truth is necessarily connected the happiness we seek. And now to prove this; and for the proof I shall appeal not to faith, but to reason.

The world desires happiness here on the earth and it takes no account of happiness in a life to come; it laughs at the thought of it. Let us see if this is possible. Let us take a glance at the past, since history began to be written. Has the human race, which for the most part has given a too willing ear to the promises of the world, succeeded in gaining such happiness? Has it had its every desire satisfied? In every age and from all quarters of the earth has come up to us the cry of

the wretched, who suffer, and weep, and seek in vain for the happiness they can never attain. The past, then, is a solemn protest against a lying world that promises men happiness here on earth; and the experience of all past ages closes the mouth of the impostor.

There can be no true and perfect happiness here until all the evils that afflict the unfortunate race of Adam are banished from the earth. The trials and sorrows of life can not co-exist with happiness, any more than can light with darkness or life with death. To be perfectly happy here on earth, then, all the trials and sorrows that make the life of man a worry and a burden must be gotten rid of. All the diseases that are a torture to our existence throughout our whole life from infancy to old age must be banished. Is it possible?

All the passions that torture the individual, that harass society and keep it in a turmoil, that are the chief cause of all our trials and sorrows, that fill the land with weeping and mourning, must be cast out; pride must be cast out, and vanity and ambition; so, too, must gluttony and its retinue of intemperance, drunkenness, profusion, and luxury; so also must covetousness, together with usury, oppression, fraud, deceit, and injustice, of which it is the prolific mother; so again must luxury, with the infinite tribe of disorders and

evils that follow it; so once more must anger, together with hatreds, revenge, and jealousies of which it is the root. Is it possible? I appeal to you, my brethren. To reduce the passions to perfect obedience, to root them out from the heart, would be most desirable; it would be to transform the earth into an abode of peace and happiness and to give us here a foretaste of heaven. But who believes this possible? It would be necessary to change man's nature, or rather to crush it altogether. The passions, then, in one form or another, in greater or less degree, will remain ever upon this earth and will pursue man everywhere, in private life and in public, as the shadow pursues the body; and as long as there are passions here let us not dream of true and perfect happiness; it is impossible, as is impossible peace of heart as long as it is the battlefield where winds and storms contend.

To enjoy the happiness promised by the world, which is far from being true happiness, all men must first be rich and all equal. I ask you: Is this possible? For all men to be rich would mean for all men to be poor. For all men to be equal would imply a trampling on nature and a violation of justice, for nothing is falser than the dream of the equality of all men; and as the dream that all men are equal is false, so would it imply a condition of things that would be in the highest

degree unjust, that would put the strong man on a level with the weak, the good with the bad, the industrious with the slothful, the man of intellect with the man of no brains at all. And grant that to-day all men are rich; would they be so to-morrow, a month, a year hence? They might be if they were deprived of their liberty and of all they possess most noble and precious. When, then, the world asserts that man's destiny is to be happy and that this happiness is to be found on earth and restricted to this earth, it is a brutal impostor and traitor.

But let us be generous; let us grant that all men, that each in particular, has everything that he wants, has everything he can desire on this earth, everything in which he places his happiness; would he, would all men, be happy? Could they say to themselves on any single day: "Now we are content, now we are happy"? No, never. Pile up at the feet of any man all the silver and gold in the world; set him upon the first throne of this earth, let all peoples bow down before him and sing his praises, let him be the wisest and most powerful of men, and let sorrow and mourning never come in at his door; think you that this, the most fortunate of men, would be happy? It would be a delusion to imagine it. There was once a man who seemed to have all this and who cried out in the bitterness of his heart: "Vanity

of vanities; all is vanity and affliction of spirit." Man is so constituted that when he has much he wants more, and the more he has the more he wants; he never says "enough"; an insatiable desire becomes his tireless tormentor. And why? Because here within our hearts we have a capacity that no creature, nor all creatures, be they as beautiful, as perfect, and as excellent as they may, can fill; only the infinite Being can fill it. If all oceans and seas were emptied, it would be easier to fill them with a handful of water than to fill that void in the human soul with all that is good and bright and beautiful upon this earth. Matter can never satisfy the cravings of the spirit; the finite can never satisfy the longings of that which reaches out to the infinite. The soul of man is immeasurably superior to all things material; how, then, can they be an object and end worthy of a nature so immeasurably above them?

And do not lose sight of the fact, my friends, that the soul is immortal, and that if it possessed all the goods of this earth, granting that this were possible, the possession of them would be limited to the present life. After this brief and fleeting life what would happen? How could the desire of the soul for happiness be satisfied when, loosed from the body, it would no longer have intercourse with this earth? Would it be condemned to wander forever through the interminable spaces of the

heavens, an everlasting exile, like a bird that flies onward and onward and can find no bough on which to light and rest? Allow me to repeat it once more: The happiness to which the soul of man is by nature destined is not and can not be found on this earth; his mind, that is impelled toward the infinite; his heart, that yearns for the infinite; his immortal nature, can never find their happiness and the object of their passionate cravings in these finite, fleeting, and perishable goods.

I shall not waste words in refuting the arrogant teachings of those who assert that man ought to be satisfied with the joy derived solely from the practice of virtue, that this is the only reward worthy of man, and that this is, or ought to be, its adequate recompense, which he should seek, not outside of himself, but within, which no one can take from him, and for which he is not obliged to wait until after he is dead, since it is inseparably associated with virtue and its sufficient compensation.

Virtue its own reward! But how? I do not deny that virtue diffuses in the soul of him who practises it a sweetness, contentment, and joy that cause him to cry out: "How sweet, O Lord, are Thy precepts! How good Thou art to him who loves Thee!" But are these joys that make glad the soul of the virtuous lasting and always to be anticipated? Too often they are but a flash that

lights up the soul, a fleeting touch, the passing of God. How often does the most pious and virtuous soul suffer agonies, and not a drop of sweetness falls upon the lacerated heart to bring strength and solace! How often, like Jesus in Gethsemani, does it wail and cry out: "O God, if it be possible, let this chalice of bitterness pass from me; I feel I am dying, I am in an agony of despair!" Virtue nearly always means war on the passions; the struggle is always bitter; and the pain that a virtuous man experiences is ever greater than the pleasure.

Virtue its own reward! Whosoever knows human nature and what virtue costs, especially in seasons of trial and temptation, will only compassionate the preachers and admirers of this philosophical utterance that puffs up, but does not edify. Go, tell the people that virtue must seek its reward in itself and in the sublime joys that come from it. They will look at you stupefied and will not even comprehend the meaning of your words. Go and say to the farmer who toils and perspires under the burning heat of the sun; to him who is racked with pain upon a sickbed; to the laborer who can hardly provide food for his famishing children; to the young maiden who is put to the severest trials to escape the snares of some wealthy profligate; to the youth who feels his passions rising in revolt within him;

to the irascible man who feels his heart all aflame with anger; to the ambitious man who has his heart fixed on rising in the world; to the covetous man, who is heaping together gold with both hands; say to all these: "Be virtuous, be patient, chaste, open-handed, humble, charitable, and you will be happy, for you will taste the sweet joys and the delights of virtue," and see if they will listen to you, if they will be content with this reward. But it is throwing away time and labor to say more in pointing out that man can not find his happiness alone in the joy of an upright conscience and in the delights of virtue, the practice of which is oftener than not associated with real and terrific struggles and sorrows.

What, then, shall we say? That man is not created to be happy? God forbid. It would be to fly in the face of nature, to blaspheme God and to make man, the king of all visible creatures, the most unhappy of them all. If, then, man is created for happiness, complete, indefectible, and such as benefits his nature, and if such happiness is impossible here on earth, it must be sought beyond this life and in another. Here the Gospel throws light on the great enigma of the life of man and dissipates all darkness. Christ cries out in ringing tones to all men: "*Lift up your heads.*" "*Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great.*" But where? "*In heaven.*" Here is the differ-

ence between the world and the Gospel; the world cries out to all: "Your happiness is here on this earth, and if you follow me, I will give it to you." The Gospel, on the contrary, cries aloud: "Your happiness is not on this earth, but in heaven; and there I shall give it to you in its plenitude."

The world is always a liar; it promises much, everything; it promises to all and at once, and gives little, and to some often nothing, as that countless multitude, who have followed it and whom it has betrayed will tell you weeping: "We have made a mistake: *Erravimus.*" The Gospel says straightforwardly and frankly that it promises nothing here below; nay it tells its disciples that, after the pattern of the divine Master, they must look for only trials, sorrows, and vexations here and for all bliss in heaven. Only up there on high will tears be dried up, and pains cease, and strifes and fears and anguish be no more.

Does, then, the Lord give us nothing here on earth? He gives us His grace to comfort and sustain us, to assuage our sorrows from time to time, to soften the bitterness of life, to lighten the burden of the cross, and to give us strength to cry out with the Apostle: "I exceedingly abound with joy in all tribulation."

He gives us a most firm hope of future happiness, and with hope the seed of happiness itself. He who is in the thick of the fight and certain of

victory, or who, traveling along rugged and broken roads, sees in the distance the home of his childhood awaiting him; or who battles with the breakers and sees the port a little way off; or who, bending over the plow and turning up the soil, looks forward to the harvest that will soon rejoice him; all these suffer indeed, but their hardships are akin to pleasure, because in thought they look forward to the reward that awaits them and they know that the sorrows of to-day are the seed of the joys of to-morrow. This is what Jesus Christ solemnly proclaims in the Gospel of this day when He says: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven." The happiness that is promised us in the life to come is a compensation for the sorrows of this.

My friends, science has investigated the formidable problem of the destiny of man from every side; it has searched every avenue and tested every means in the hope of leading him to the happiness for which he craves; will it now tell us whether or not it has discovered anything better than the teaching of the Gospel, which assures us that man can be happy only on the other side of the grave and that the means to attain that happiness is the practice of all virtues, the greatest of which are patience, and the charity that gives rather than receives?

And here I call to mind the eloquent words of a man, who, after passing his life in blaspheming God and everything else, and after calling property theft and the Author of all good the Evil One, in a lucid moment, when his fury had cooled, wrote thus: "The Catholic priest is wiser than we. He knows better than we, what is true; he does not promise man happiness here; he transports him to a life beyond this; he points it out to him and he assures him that he will possess it, that it will satisfy all his cravings and put an end to all his distress, and then he comforts him with hope, and lights up his future with the radiance of joy."

All ye who listen to me take well to heart what I am about to say. Those who call themselves men of science, who pose as your friends and the advocates and vindicators of your rights, which, they say, are trodden upon; those who boast of being your leaders and are ever solicitous for your interests, who promise you an Eden of happiness on earth, and who dare tell you that all ends in the grave, that a future life is a dream, a childish invention of those whose interest it is to deceive you; those, my friends, and do not forget it, are betraying you; close your ears against their lies, and know that, while they can not give you the happiness you crave for on earth, they would rob

you of the hope of obtaining it in heaven. They are doing a senseless, a cruel work, for they promise what they can not give, and they snatch from you what God holds out to you.

DISCOURSE IV

Three Truths That the Feast of All Saints Calls to Mind

My friends, we have often looked up into the heavens on a clear, cloudless night in summer. It is a magnificent spectacle and fills the soul with a delicious joy, making it almost forget that it is still a wanderer here on this earth. All around is silent and profoundly calm; the heavens spread above us like an immense pavilion of pure sapphire, within it thousands and thousands of stars shine with varying luster, and in the midst of them, brighter than all, reigning as a queen, is the moon, which seems to be silently leading the rhythmical movements of the heavenly bodies. The sun, invisible to the eye, from the limitless heights of the firmament tranquilly rains down its inexhaustible waves of light upon that countless army of stars and, itself motionless, mysteriously moves them all. A similar spectacle, but one incomparably grander, is that which the Church unfolds before the eyes of the mind illuminated by faith to-day. In the clear resplendent firmament of the Church, which embraces all the ages of the past and covers all the regions of the globe, there is drawn up in beautiful order, company

after company, the great army of the saints, who shine out as so many stars of varying brilliancy high up above the clouds and tempests that sweep over this lower world. And in the midst of them as a queen, refulgent with a mild white light, is Mary, the Mother of God and man; and high above, from the bosom of the eternal Father, the sun of eternal justice, the Son of God and of Mary, pours out floods of light, that clothe in beauty and in multiform and various colors the army of saints, whom He eternally draws to Himself and who form His retinue. The sight is one worthy of God and of the Church, and no tongue can adequately describe it. Lift up your eyes in faith and behold there patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, virgins and confessors; there, too, is the great Mother of God and angels bearing her up, and the supreme head of all, Jesus Christ, the Man-God. What beauty! What magnificence! What glory! What music and harmony fill that blessed city!

My friends, what does this sight, this triumph, which we contemplate to-day tell? What lessons does it teach? If I mistake not, we may draw three lessons from it: first, that virtue alone, and sanctity which is its highest expression, are truly great in the eyes of God and of His Church, and that to these alone is due immortal glory; second, that all men, without distinction, the gifted, the

cultivated, the wise, all, no matter what their state or condition, should strive to attain sanctity; third, finally, that the sight of this army of saints, enjoying everlasting bliss, should soften the bitterness, the pains and the anguish, inseparable from the toilsome journey across this land of exile.

I have said that to-day's solemnity is a splendid proof that in the eyes of God and of His Church virtue, and sanctity, its most sublime expression, are alone truly great and worthy of supreme honor.

What do we see and what do we hear, no matter whither we look or in what age we live?

What is the world doing, what is it saying? For whom does it keep its praise and applause? Before whom does it bow down, burn incense, and bend the knee? Where is the use of trying to dissimulate? We ever see it bowing down to men distinguished for talent and learning, wealth and power. Does a man drive up the street in a gilded coach, who counts his wealth by tens of millions? Every eye is fixed on him, every one uncovers, and all salute. Does a man of pre-eminent ability, an orator, an artist, or one distinguished for great learning appear in public or at a theater, or on a public square? All point at him; his name, pronounced with respect, passes from mouth to mouth. Does a monarch, a ruler,

a conqueror of the enemies of his country make his entrance into a city? The streets resound with shouts of rejoicing and with endless huzzas. They may be vicious men, wicked, corrupt, and corrupters of others; they may be carried away with ambition, worshipers of gold; they may have caused the tears of widows to flow, have robbed the orphan, and have shed torrents of blood. But what does it matter? They are privileged characters, very rich and powerful, and nothing more is needed; they are loaded with honors.

Here is a poor countryman, a poor laborer, an honest maiden, an industrious mother, a faithful wife; they toil from morning until night; they live by the labor of their hands; they are virtuous, upright, faithful, just, frugal; they obey all laws, give offence to none, never fail in their duties whether as Christians or citizens, as masters or dependents, as parents or children; they are patterns of every virtue. Who troubles himself about them? Who does them honor? They pass through life unobserved, it may be despised or compassionated as coarse and vulgar, and they disappear unwept, without any one being aware of their passing, and it may be said of them: "They were as if they had never been."

I am walking along the streets of a city and I look up to find their names. What do I see? Our forefathers, who admired and respected vir-

tue, gave to them the names of saints, names that recalled the memory of virtues the most beautiful and exalted, very often exemplified in a representative of the poor. But the world has erased those names and substituted for them those of philosophers, diplomatists, generals, and distinguished citizens, who, whatever else they were, could lay no claim to virtue; nay, their lives were a negation of it and one continuous scandal. In its judgments the world is always true to itself; it cares not for virtue, it has a disdain for it, and admires only power and talent, even when these are made the instruments of the most flagrant injustice and of the most unblushing vice. It worships gold, and is ever true to the motto of the pagan poet: "First gold and then virtue: *Virtus post nummos.*" Such is the world in every age.

Over against the judgment of the world and its practice, which puts the worship of wealth, of knowledge and dignities, of power and the pleasures that wealth brings, above virtue and sanctity, let us place the judgment and the practice of the Church, which is God's representative on earth. In the eyes of God and of His Church who is great? Whom does she reverence and admire? Whom does she place upon her altars? For whom does she reserve her greatest honors, honors not of earth but of heaven? Not for the powerful because they oc-

cupy thrones, or because they are talented, or learned, or wealthy, or abound in this world's goods; but for the virtuous and the saintly, who possess not the things that the world loves and desires, or having possessed them, have made a holy use of them, devoting them to the relief of their kind and to the glory of God. The Church honors only him who is humble, who despises self, who is chaste, temperate, patient, meek, open-handed, and charitable, who makes himself poor to enrich others, who is just, who has a mastery of his passions, who is rich in all virtues even to heroism; before such she bows in reverence and falls on her knees. But this man has neither talent nor culture. It matters not; he is a saint. He was born and grew to manhood in the field, his hands are callous from ploughing and shoveling, he is covered with the dust and grime of the workshop. No matter; he is a saint. But he has gone through the world unknown, despised; he has been engaged in the most menial and abject employments. No matter; he is a saint. The Church sets his images and relics upon her altars, she sings his praises, invokes his patronage, proposes him as a pattern for imitation; she pronounces his name with reverence, and temples and monuments are erected in his honor.

What difference between the Church and the world, between the teaching and practice of the

one and of the other. By the world virtue, even the most resplendent, is little esteemed, frequently not at all, and it may be is utterly scorned; the world esteems only what is seemingly great, what falls under the senses and perishes with the body; in the eyes of the Church all earthly greatness, everything that comes in upon the senses, is as nothing, and virtue is everything.

Set before the Church a man who combines in himself the most marvelous endowments of mind and heart, who is possessed of all possible riches, who wields the scepter of the universe, upon whom every honor is lavished, but who has little virtue; and opposite to him set a poor Religious, a child of the fields, in the eyes of the world the lowliest of men, but thoroughly virtuous and a saint, and ask the Church: "Which of these is the greater? Which of these will you take to your heart?" and she will reply at once: "The former is nothing to me; the latter is my glory, to him do I bow down and give all possible honor." The answer amazes the world, but the world in spite of itself confirms and respects it.

My friends, take well to heart the truth which the Church seeks to impress upon us to-day and which she proclaims before all the world: that one thing alone, namely, virtue, is truly beautiful, more precious than all treasures, and to be preferred to all the honors and to all the fame and

distinction that learning can give. The seed of it came down from heaven together with divine grace; it is born of grace and blooms upon the earth, and with grace, of which it is the flower and fruit, it will go back to heaven, and in heaven it will abide forevermore.

To-day's feast teaches us that we all can be virtuous and all be saints; this I have already told you. And is it not true? To convince you that it is I have only to bid you to raise your eyes on high and to look upon the triumph of Christ. Among those countless hosts may be seen men and women of every age and clime, of every state and condition of life, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, nobles and plebeians, priests and laymen, artists and laborers, judges and soldiers, kings and subjects, virgins and celibates, men of iron wills and men of kind and tender hearts, martyrs of blood and martyrs of toil, those who lived in the midst of the struggles and turmoil of the world and those who lived in the quiet and peace of the cloister. In that blessed abode there is room for all; those gates are not closed against any state of life or condition of person; they are open to all men of good will. And why should this not be? Truth is like the sun, that gives its light to all who have eyes and do not close them, and in the measure of the capacity of each; so also with virtue, which can not be dissociated

from truth, whose daughter it is; all who sincerely and efficaciously will it can make it their own. And in matter of fact what is necessary, and what is sufficient to become virtuous, and even to become saints? Only two things are required and these two things suffice: the grace of God and the will of man. The palm of virtue and sanctity is the fruit of these two converging forces working together. If either is wanting, if both do not combine into one sole force and work simultaneously, it is simply impossible to acquire virtue, as it is impossible with seed alone without soil, or with soil alone without seed, to produce a harvest. Both are necessary, both are conditions which nature demands.

Now the grace of God that enlightens the mind, excites and strengthens the will, is never wanting. God, who wills all to be saved—each one in particular—who died for all, who is the Saviour of all as He is the Creator of all, in as far as it depends upon Him gives His grace to all and each no matter where they lived or live or in what circumstances. This is a most certain truth and, if I may so say, lies at the base of the whole Christian economy. If, then, the grace of God, sufficient and more than enough, can never be wanting, for of this the goodness of God and the merits of Jesus Christ are both a guarantee, you will see at once that the entire work of our sanc-

tification is reduced to this—co-operation of our will. If to the grace of God, of which we are absolutely assured, we join our will, in such way that of the two forces the resultant is one, then we are saved, or, what is the same thing, we are saints.

Now, my friends, I ask: Is there anything on this earth so completely in the power of each one of us as our will? Assuredly not. Man says to me: "I am the master of my fields, my houses, my money, of my body, my senses, and my thoughts, and I can rightly say that they are all mine and I may do as I will with them." I do not question the ownership he boasts of having over these things, of course within certain limitations; but he will agree with me that there is nothing so completely his own as his will; it is pre-eminently his property, and his alone, and through it does he acquire rights and ownership over other things. No one can take it from him, neither men, nor angels, nor devils, and even God Himself, who gave it to him and who is its absolute owner, respects it even when man uses it to rebel against Him. Men may manacle his hands, fetter his feet, pull out his tongue and martyr his body in the attempt to do violence to his will, but they can never lay hands upon it; it baffles all their efforts and when they fancy they have gained the mastery over it, it will laugh them to

scorn and cry out: "I am free; I am not, and never will be anybody's slave."

Hence since man is master of his will he can, if he likes, bend it this way or that; he can dispose it to receive God's grace, and, when it is united with this grace, he can pursue all the paths of virtue, reach its highest peaks, and soar to the very summit of sanctity. The world and its solicitations and deceits, the devil and his snares and violence, the flesh and its desires, may indeed oppose him, harm him, and make a determined fight against him, but his will, strong with the strength of God, which is never wanting, will pass victorious over every obstacle and trample under foot the asp and basilisk, the lion and the dragon.

Would you have proof of this? Behold that immense army of saints, triumphing in heaven, whom the Church to-day bids us look upon as they pass in review before our eyes. She teaches you what man can do aided by the grace of God, and to what lengths he can go by the force of his will. In that countless army we see men and women of every age, who belonged to all classes of society, from the most exalted to the most humble; who, put to the most terrific trials, came victorious out of them all; and who, having passed joyously through all the paths of virtue, attained to sanctity in all its diversified forms. The very sight of those heroes, all of them our brothers,

proves to us that we also can accomplish what they accomplished, and, if we do not, we can lay the blame on nothing save our own feeble and languid will. If we do not go on intrepidly, joyously in the paths they have trodden, they will one day be our condemnation. And what answer shall we make to Christ when He sets before us the example of millions and millions, who, weaker than we, have accomplished more than we have? And what is necessary to enjoy the companionship of the saints, whose example the Church to-day sets before us? Only one thing and this very simple and very easy; namely, to faithfully discharge the duties which our state in life imposes upon us. Listen to what the Gospel teaches.

John, the Precursor of Christ, at one time appeared upon the banks of the Jordan thundering against the vices of the people and of their leaders, saying that the kingdom of God was at hand, that the ax was laid to the root of the tree, and that every tree that did not bring forth fruit must be cut down and cast into the fire. Then the people, frightened, asked him: "What shall we do?" And John replied: "He that hath two coats, let him give to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do in like manner." And the publicans also said: "Master, what shall we do?" And he said to them: "Do nothing more than that which is appointed you, or commanded

you." And the soldiers also asked him, saying: "What shall we do?" And he said to them: "Do violence to no man, neither calumniate any man, and be contented with your pay."[1] This was a splendid answer to them all and one worthy of your serious consideration. John had passed his youth and part of his manhood in the desert; he was clad in a rude garment of camel's hair, more like rough sackcloth than ordinary raiment; he was bareheaded and barefooted; his food was a morsel of wild honey that oozed out from the clefts of the rock and the locusts of the desert; his drink was the water of the running stream; his abode was a cave; his hair was unkempt; his face pale and emaciated; everything about him told that he was an austere man. On hearing these questions of the people, of the publicans and the soldiers, one should have thought that such a man, coming out from the heart of the desert, worn out with penance and wasted with fasting, would have cried out in tones of thunder: "Flee, flee from the wicked world; leave everything; follow me into the desert; do penance; pass your days and nights in prayer, and you will be saved." But he said nothing of the sort. His reply was so simple and discreet that it surprises us. "Practise charity toward one another," he said; "let all of you, publicans and soldiers, do your

[1] Luke iii. 8–14.

respective duties; cease to do wrong; do what is right; and you will all be saved." Who among us is not amazed at seeing the conquest of virtue and the saving of the soul reduced to so insignificant a trifle? To discharge the duties proper to the state in which God has placed us! Can any law be laid down at once so simple, so natural, and so easy? And yet this is the certain path to virtue and sanctity; the Gospel makes no mistake.

And had the Gospel not given us so clear a knowledge of this truth, natural reason would have been sufficient to assure us of it. Reason tells us that God, infinitely good and merciful, could not have created us except to be happy; and on the other hand, we see that nature, or what is the same thing, the Creator of nature, intended that there should be an infinite variety and diversity of offices or duties, and hence an infinite diversity of aptitudes and tendencies, and this experience proves. Therefore it follows that men in every state or calling can and ought to produce the virtues proper to it and thus work out their sanctification, if we do not wish to say that God contradicts Himself and demands what is impossible. Let us then, my brethren, be comforted and take heart in the thought that, no matter what our special conditions may be, or our gifts of nature and grace, or the enemies and difficulties that beset us, the way to heaven can not be shut

against us; and that if we only will it ourselves the power of becoming saints is in our hands. I said above that the triumph of the saints, which the Church to-day recalls to our minds, should comfort us and fill us with joy, and Christ says the same: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven."

One day, walking along a solitary road through the country, I came upon a group of eight or ten men busy digging a ditch. Drawing near to them and addressing them, I said: "Why are you digging this deep trench?" "What?" they said and stopped, one holding a mattock in his hand, another a pick, and a third wiping the perspiration from his forehead; a fourth, with his foot resting on his spade, replied to me: "What are we doing? Well, some one has told us that a great treasure is buried in this spot and we have agreed to search for it, and, if we find it, to divide it equally among us; so to-day, as you see, we have set to work." "I fancy," said I, "if you find it and it is such as you anticipate, you will be happy and you will regard as nothing the labor of searching for it." "Yes," they all replied together, "if we find it we shall be happy and no labor we ever did will seem as trifling and as well repaid." And these men really meant what they said, and one might see how even the hope of finding the treasure lighted up their countenances with joy. I believe

that not only was this labor, though toilsome enough, not burdensome to these workmen, but that it was a real pleasure to them, for I never remember to have seen men set themselves to a task so eagerly and joyously. And the reason is clear enough. When we set our minds and hearts on getting anything we ardently love and desire, and it seems that we can almost lay our hands on it and make it our own, we think of nothing else and we are unconscious of the fatigue and of the efforts it costs us to get possession of it. Each of us has often had experience of this in his own case, and it is a condition which Christian hope, when vivid, necessarily brings about in our hearts. These workmen were thinking only of the hidden treasure and at every blow of the pick they seemed to see the coveted gold shining under their eyes. They were dreaming of the fields and houses, of the goods and pleasures they could procure with it; they were dreaming that once they were rich they would no longer be obliged to labor and that then there would be an end to their trials and sorrows; and so full were they of these thoughts and so completely had they taken possession of them that they would cheerfully have redoubled their labors, if by doing so they could have gotten immediate possession of the coveted treasure. If this is true of one who seeks here on this earth for a little gold and silver, how much more true

should it be in the case of one who knows that in the sorrows and sufferings endured here below for love of God there is hidden a treasure of ineffable and eternal happiness? If the hope, often with little to encourage it, of gaining an earthly treasure makes us regard as nothing, or as something very trifling, the anxieties and labors involved in securing it, why should not the certain hope of gaining a heavenly treasure do as much? And what comparison is there between the two? The blessings of an earthly treasure, if indeed they may be so called, will last only during this present life; they will at best only aid in diminishing the ills of the body, and too often they but increase them and make them more intolerable; whereas the blessings of the heavenly treasure are not limited to time, they reach out to and fill eternity, and they are an infallible remedy for the ills of the spirit and by consequence of the body also.

We are created by God and the work of His hands, and we all have within us the ever-burning torch of the light of reason guiding us onward in pursuit of truth; so also do we all feel down in the depths of our heart an indestructible and compelling force incessantly urging us forward in search of happiness. Reason and the voice of nature assure us that there is such a thing, that we are all made for it, but they can not with any degree of certainty point out to us where it is

to be found. We are like seamen on board ship without star or compass to guide them; they know that there is a shore and a port, but where either is they know not, nor do they know whither to steer to reach port and cast anchor. So, too, we are sailing across the ocean of life in search of the haven where we hope to find the happiness which, like a lodestone, is incessantly and powerfully drawing us toward itself. Faith, and faith alone, like a dazzling light across the waters from a lighthouse, marks out the course and indicates the harbor where we are to disembark.

Fancy, my friends, an immense vessel, a great fleet, traversing the ocean and carrying a great number of passengers. It has been buffeted for days and days by storm and breaker and those on board anxiously look out for sight of land and the shores of their native country where friends await them. Say that in an instant the clouds are lifted and dispersed, and the sun's light shines out revealing land in the distance, just visible to the naked eye, and the captain cries out from the bridge: "My friends, do you see that land? That is our fatherland." A shout of joy sweeps through the air, all eyes are fixed on the distant land, joy lights up every face, thousands of hands are stretched out toward it, all hearts beat with excitement, the worries of a long voyage and the fright that danger inspired are forgotten, all are

carried away with joy and salute their country from afar with songs of gladness. The hope that has now, as if by enchantment, become a certainty has changed everything. There is now but a faint memory of the trials and the fears of the past, and the joys that await them, like the fragrance that floats out from a near-by garden, filling the surrounding air, are already tasted and enjoyed as if they were present.

My friends, illuminated by the light of faith, which shines round about us, comforted and borne up by hope, the daughter of faith, we are as workmen who untiringly search the bowels of the earth for the treasure hidden there; we are as passengers on board ship who traverse the seas and face wind and storm in their desire to reach their native land; and as an earthly and uncertain hope sustains them, lessens and renders trifling and pleasant their fatigues and sufferings, so also a heavenly and an absolutely certain hope should sustain us and lessen and make dear to us the toils and sufferings inseparable from the life of a Christian.

My friends, the saints, who have found this treasure, who are already arrived in port, are holding out their hands to us and encouraging us by voice and look to follow them. Let us, then, boldly follow them. The time to work is short, it is but a day; at set of sun, when darkness

closes round us, that is, at death, the Father of the household will give us our reward and will welcome us to everlasting tabernacles: "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven."

DISCOURSE V

Why We Honor the Saints

In going through the history of errors that have sprung up in the bosom of the Church from the days of the apostles down to our own and upon which the Church has set her condemnation, one is amazed how some of these could ever have come into the minds of men and have found followers and defenders, even among the learned. Is it not strange and incredible that there have been and still are men who assert and hold that the world is eternal; that two principles are to be admitted, the one good and the other bad; that God is not free and neither is man; that there is no distinction between virtue and vice, except what public opinion has agreed upon? Who would believe that rational men would hold and teach that the divine nature became human; that the human was transformed into the divine; that God delights to create men for the pleasure of consigning them to everlasting punishment; and that He constrains them to commit sin? And yet there were those who taught these errors and who had disciples by the millions and have them still. All this is an undeniable proof of the imbecility of human reason when left wholly to itself. It must be con-

fessed that there is no error, no matter how manifest and absurd, into which man may not fall, especially when his intellect is clouded by passion.

Such are the thoughts that come up to my mind on this day, sacred among us Catholics to the memory of all the saints. Devotion to the saints is a truth that responds perfectly to the teachings of faith and the exigencies of natural reason. What is more conformable to reason and commonsense than to honor men who were conspicuous for every virtue, who were the friends of God, and whom He Himself wished to honor? And yet our Protestant brethren have risen up against devotion to the saints, have branded it as an abominable idolatry, have abolished their images and consigned their remains to the flames. It is true that in our day, now that passion has abated, that natural feelings are more respected and ancient traditions better known, many of them are not so furiously hostile to the teaching and practice of the Catholic Church, which honors the saints and especially the Blessed Virgin; but it is also true that their prejudices against the Catholic dogma have not wholly ceased, nor have they laid aside their reluctance to profess all the Council of Trent defined on this point.

It seems to me I shall be doing a useful work if on this day I put before you the reasons why

we believe that devotion to the saints and their invocation, as in use in the Catholic Church, are conformable to faith, and to human reason illuminated by faith.

And first of all we must accurately distinguish between devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the saints and angels, and their invocation, although the two things are intimately associated. And first as to devotion.

I shall not waste words on the distinction between *internal* and *external* devotion and on the necessity of both; neither shall I stop to show how external devotion is a consequence of internal, and that to separate them would be to put asunder what nature intends to be united, that is, it would be to separate the body from the soul, the effect from the cause. Nor shall I stop to point out how the expression of external devotion may vary according to time and place, and the character, nature, and intellectual and moral conditions of men and, I may add, according to their tacit or express agreement.[1] What is true of words is

[1] Any one who is at all acquainted with the various religious rites of peoples, knows how they differ in meaning. With us of the West, to prostrate ourselves on the earth is the greatest act of adoration to God; among the Orientals this was done, and in some countries is still done, as an act of honor, not only to princes, but to any person of consideration. With us to uncover the head is a mark of respect to a person, and also to places consecrated to God; among the Musselmans and also among the Chinese, and possibly among other peoples, to uncover the head is unbecoming, and may be an affront. It would take us

true also of many acts of external devotion. Words differ in different languages but the idea expressed by the different words is the same and unchangeable. What else are all the acts of external devotion if not silent words, more or less clear, expressing interior devotion? Properly to understand these words one must know the motive that prompts them; that is, one must know the interior devotion which determines them and gives them life and meaning. To ascertain the sense of words one must penetrate into the mind that gives expression to them. Similarly, to understand the meaning of visible acts one must enter into the invisible mind where they originate.

We honor God, the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints. But is the honor we give God, the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints the same, although our actions and words seem to be, and at times are the same? God forbid! We should be guilty of a most heinous crime, that of making the creature equal to the Creator, and giving to each a like honor. We honor God as it is fitting we should honor Him, and we honor the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and angels, in the measure of their dignity. Whosoever acknowledges

too long to enumerate other external acts which, though different, have the same meaning, and still others which, though the same, have different meanings. If, then, we wish to get at the value of an act and its meaning we must take into account, not alone the outward act itself, but the intention or motive of him who does it.

the existence of God must also acknowledge the necessity of honoring Him, not alone with an interior honor of mind and heart, but also with an exterior honor of the body, since He is Creator and absolute Master both of soul and body. Who can deny this? Now the worship, both internal and external, which we give to God must necessarily be the greatest; it must be absolute and direct, because the motive of this worship is not something outside of God, but within Him; it is Himself. This His infinite perfections, His omnipotence and goodness, His wisdom, justice, and sanctity, in short His Being, the center and source of all perfection, all demand.

On the other hand, God has created the Blessed Virgin, the saints, and the angels, and has stamped His image upon them; nor is this all; He has poured out upon them the treasure of His best gifts; He has made them the choice vessels of His grace and the bright mirrors of His beauty. Nor is this all. They have faithfully responded to God's designs upon them; the gifts they received bore abundant fruit in their hands; they were as stars that give back the light of the sun, and through them, if the expression may be used, God seemed greater, His kingdom was enlarged, and His glory shone more resplendently. Whence come the beauty and the virtue that we honor in the saints, in each according to the place he holds

in that stupendous scale in which God has placed him? What is its source, its primary cause? Undoubtedly God is and God alone, since everything is from Him in the order of nature as in the order of grace; everything issues from Him and goes back to Him, as both faith and reason teach, and as St. Paul says: "Everything is from Him and through Him and in Him."

Hence when we honor the angels and saints we honor God, who by His grace made them saints, and we honor the saints, who by making a good use of the grace received, became saints; we honor the primary Cause and we honor the secondary causes of virtue and holiness; and the primary Cause and the secondary causes are bound together by ties so close that it is impossible to part them. And hence, if we only reflect, when we honor the saints, and especially the Mother of God, we are primarily honoring God Himself from whom alone all holiness comes.

I find myself gazing upon the *Moses* of Michael Angelo, or upon the *Communion* of Domenichino, or upon some other creation of genius. I look upon these masterpieces with delight; I marvel at their beauty; under the cold marble and the dead canvas I almost hear the throbbings of life, and I exclaim: "A magnificent production! A stupendous work!" And I can not leave off admiring and praising these incomparable creations.

Now, I ask: Do my praise and admiration stop short at the marble and the canvas before me? Is my mind restricted and as it were chained to the works I am gazing upon and every detail of which I am now studying? Certainly they are the immediate objects of my praise and admiration, as they would be of any one who has an appreciation of the beautiful, but you know perfectly well that the real objects, to which my praise and admiration are necessarily and unconsciously directed, are the sovereign artists who could conceive and produce these miracles of art; and hence, while I gaze in amazement upon these living and speaking figures, my tongue silently repeats such expressions as these: "Michael Angelo! Domenichino! What geniuses!" And I can almost fancy that I can see them, hear them, and am conversing with them.

Now, who are the saints? They are the creations of the great Artificer; they are the masterpieces of the moral order, whom God Himself has formed and perfected with exquisite art and long and patient toil, into whom He has put His own thought and His own life and with whom He goes on unintermittingly adorning the Church, His royal palace. In each of them I see luminous and variously reflected the image of God, and in each, in some more and in some less, I see resplendent His glory; and hence it is always He whom I see

and glorify. What, then, can be more reasonable than devotion to the saints? Nay, what can be more reasonable than the diversity of this devotion, which should correspond to the diversity of the virtues and perfections which shone forth in the saints? They are like the rays of the sun, each different from the other, yet all deriving their light and beauty from the sun, recalling our thoughts to it and directing our eyes toward it.

You, my friends, who live in the midst of the world have doubtlessly known many persons distinguished for talent, learning, and a varied culture; nay, distinguished for eminent virtues, for remarkable achievements, for the influence they exert, for the power they wield, for nobility of character, and for the high offices they hold; their name is upon every tongue, the benefits they confer or have conferred are remembered, and every assemblage is honored by their presence. When you see such men, when you meet them on the street, what do you do? You bow to them, you show them such marks of esteem and reverence as their merits impose and as usage and good breeding demand; and what you do, every one else will do, who has a proper sense of his duty, and if they fail to do so, they will incur, and rightly, the reproach of their fellow men.

Now, my friends, who are the saints? They are men who have gone up and down the earth doing

good, spreading everywhere the good odor of Christ; they are men who have practised all the virtues in an heroic degree, who have shown a marvelous strength of will in making war on the passions, who have reached the heights of moral perfection, who form the glory of the Church, and the legitimate pride of human nature; they are the flower of heroism, the heroes of virtue in all its most beautiful and sublimest forms. To refuse to honor them and celebrate their greatness would be to refuse to recognize merit, to ignore virtue, to outrage truth, justice, and the purest and most exalted heroism.

Nor is this all, my friends. Who are the angels and saints? They are the faithful servants of God, servants who are welcomed into His royal household and who now receive and enjoy the reward that was promised them and which the most munificent of masters gives them as their due. Nay more, they are His companions and friends, aye, His brothers, as Jesus Christ Himself calls them: "You are," says Jesus Christ to His apostles, "not My servants; you who have endured hardship with me, are My friends, you are My brothers." In another passage Jesus Christ does not hesitate to call those who do His Father's will His brother, His sister, and His mother.[1] And it is clear, proper allowances being

[1] Matt. xii. 48–50.

made, that the honor Jesus Christ gives to His apostles is common to all who believe in Him, serve Him, and love Him; is common, that is, to all the saints. They are, then, His servants and friends, His brothers and sisters, aye, His mother. These are the words of Christ and can not be challenged.

We think it fitting and a duty to honor those in the service of a prince, to honor his friends and relatives, brothers and sisters, and above all the mother of the monarch, whose subjects we are; and shall we not think it not only fitting, but a duty to honor the angels and saints, who serve Jesus Christ and are His friends and brothers? We should think ourselves culpable if we did not show every mark of reverence to the mother of a distinguished man or of a monarch, and shall we show ourselves indifferent to the Mother of the God-Man, Jesus Christ, to whom we owe everything?

My friends, we can not be ignorant of a law which is written on our very nature, which all instinctively obey, which manifests itself in a thousand ways, namely, the law of *solidarity*, which binds all beings together, which in a sense makes all things, good and evil, joys and sorrows, affronts and honors, common to all. You render, say, a service to your friend's servant or friend, and your friend is grateful for it; you do a kind-

ness to any one, no matter to whom, and his friends and relatives, in proportion to the nearness of the kinship by which they are bound to him, show their gratitude and good will; and should they not do so, they would not escape public censure, and in their own hearts they would feel that they had failed in their duty. Now what does all this mean? It means that there exists among men a mysterious union by reason of which all goods are common among them, and all the more common the more close are the ties by which they are bound one to another. For this reason an honor done to one member of a family is regarded as done to all the members of the family, and especially to the father, the head of the family. Nature itself requires this, and it requires it because no individual is isolated; all are members of one great family, all are sharers in a common nature. Now the angels and saints are members of God's family; they are the children of the great heavenly Father, children whom He has begotten of Himself, whom He tenderly loves, who are the delight of His Heart, and would you have Him not rejoice at the honor we do them and not regard it as done to Himself? Where is the father who takes umbrage at the honor done his children? Where is the son who is jealous of the honor done his mother? Do not parents in fact rejoice at the honor done their

children more than if it were done to themselves? And do not children love to see their mother honored more than themselves? You have only to apply this principle to the devotion we bear to the angels and saints and to the Mother of God and you will see at once how reasonable Catholic teaching is on this point.

No one has any fault to find with the divine precept, which is so frequently on the lips of old Protestants: "Thou shalt adore God alone and Him only shalt thou serve." If you question a ten-year-old child of a poor laborer, and say to him: "My child, do you kneel before the altars of the saints and of the Blessed Virgin?" he would answer at once: "Yes." "And do you honor them?" Again his answer would be: "Yes." "Do you honor them as you honor God, and as you honor Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament?" He would look sharply up at you and smile and dropping his head would say: "No; God is God, and the Lord of all; the saints are His servants and creatures, and the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of the Lord; but even she is only a creature." There is no Catholic, who has a knowledge of his catechism, who does not know how to distinguish between God and His saints and angels, and the Blessed Virgin, and who does not at least in some way understand that the honor paid to God is one thing and quite

another that paid to the saints and to the Mother of God herself. He may not be able to express himself accurately in words or to give a reason for some of the acts he does, but he clearly understands that it is not lawful to honor in the same way God and His saints, or Jesus Christ, the Man-God, and His Mother. I do not deny that a superficial observer, on witnessing certain acts of the faithful before images of the Blessed Virgin and before images and relics of the saints, may be deceived, and he may fancy that they make no distinction between the devotion which they give to God and that which they give to the angels and saints, nay, that the latter surpasses the former; but this would be to judge from appearances only and to do an injustice to the faith and the good sense of our people, who never mistake the creature for the Creator.

I am well aware that some utter such sentiments as these: "Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the saints is superfluous and it takes from the worship due to God; people should be detached from the heaps of external practices that smother the spirit and should be taught to make their appeals directly to God."

I do not deny that there may be irregularities here and there and that some may go to extremes and touch upon the boundaries of superstition. But there is nothing good and holy that men may

not abuse, and if we wish to abolish all that they abuse, we must abolish everything, because everything may be and is abused; nay, we must abolish religion, for even that is abused. The Church can not be found fault with because of these abuses, since she not only condemns them but leaves nothing undone to eradicate them altogether. Her cry is always and everywhere: "Adore God and serve Him alone, because He is the Creator and supreme Lord; honor the Blessed Virgin, whom He willed to have for His Mother, although she is only a creature. Honor the angels and saints as His servants and friends, but woe to you if you give them the honor that you give to God; to do so would be the greatest of crimes."

We Catholics honor the Blessed Mother and the saints, but we do not stop here; we go still further, we invoke them, we call them our patrons and advocates, and this it is that gives offence to our Protestant brethren. In this invocation of the saints, still more than in simply honoring them, they profess to see an offence against God and against the one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. Let us look at things as they are and let us call the Bible, which they appeal to against us, as a witness; and, if I may say a daring thing, let us call common-sense as a still stronger witness than the Bible, for upon a point

of doctrine such as this even the most ordinary common-sense can pronounce judgment.

What do we see everywhere, in all walks of life, public and private, in great things and in small, among the lowly and those in high station? Even we ourselves, what have we heard and what have we done? Is there a single one of you, who now listen to me, who has not at some time been asked to intercede for others and recommend them, who has not asked others to intercede for and recommend himself? Which of you has not been a mediator for others, or has not asked others to intercede either for yourself or for your friend? We all intercede for ourselves or for others, and we are all asked, some often, some not so often, to say a good word for others, or to see that it is said. I enter into the antechamber of some wealthy and influential gentleman, and I see there a crowd of people; what is their business there? They are begging him to exercise his good offices in their behalf. Here is a powerful minister, the friend of some great personage, or the confidential adviser of a ruler. Night and day he is besieged by all manner of men striving to secure his patronage in obtaining some favor, or office, or aid, or recommendation. If you observe well, my friends, you will see that the world is full of men seeking the good offices of others, and those count themselves for-

tunate who have as patrons those who stand near the great, the powerful and the rulers of the earth, or their friends and relatives, and above all their mothers. And why should not that, which is done upon earth and among men, and which is a dictate of nature, be done also in heaven and among God's saints? Why may we not implore the patronage of the angels and saints and of the Blessed Virgin, and ask them to make intercession for us with Him who is the fountain of everything that is good?

But you will say: "Why may I not go directly to God Himself, since He is my Father? Did not Jesus Christ, when He taught us how to pray, use these words: 'When ye pray, say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven' "? He teaches and directs us to address our prayer, not to the angels and saints, or to any one else, save only to His Father."

Yes, this is all true, and if you wish to address your prayer to God Himself and to Jesus Christ, without having recourse to the patronage of the saints or of the Blessed Virgin, do so by all means; you are perfectly free and no law forbids it; God is the Father of all, and we may go at all times to Him who welcomes all.[1] But, my friends, con-

[1] We may invoke the saints and angels as our patrons with God; but God lays upon us no obligation to do so; we may go directly to Him. Still there are particular laws of the Church directing us to invoke the angels and saints, and especially the

scious of your sins and your unworthiness, you feel you have not the courage to go directly to Him, and if between Him and you you interpose His friends, the angels and saints and His own Mother, who will dare find fault with you?

If, in having recourse to God through the saints and His Blessed Mother, we feel our confidence revived, why should we seek any other way? Where is the suppliant who will disdain to make his appeal to a wealthy man through the friends of the latter and especially through his mother? Who is the guilty son who will not appeal to his brothers and sisters, and above all to his mother, to placate the wrath of his father and to effect a reconciliation between them?

But you will say again: "Is not Jesus Christ our one Mediator? Why then multiply mediators? We do a wrong to Jesus Christ and to God by presenting our petition to the saints and the Blessed Virgin, as if they were more benevolent than He and sympathize more fully with us in our distress."

No, no, my friends; that is not the way to state the case. Jesus Christ is ever and always the one supreme Mediator; He is ever our one and supreme hope, and there is no salvation save only

Blessed Virgin; but we must not confound the laws of God with the laws of the Church; the latter, however, serve to explain, define, and complete the former, but they can never contradict them.

through Him. Where is the Catholic who is ignorant of this truth? Instead of going ourselves to Jesus Christ, we make the saints and the Blessed Mother our intercessors. And if we do not go immediately ourselves to Him it is because we feel our own unworthiness, because we do what is acceptable to Him, who delights in honoring His saints and His blessed Mother, and because He loves to communicate His gifts through His Church and her ministers, through the saints and His blessed Mother. Why should we not imitate Him and make our appeal to Him through these same agencies? Shall we offend Him by imitating Him? If we honor those whom He wishes to have honored, if we go to Him through His friends and above all through the blessed Mother, appealing to their merits in our behalf, do we outrage His majesty or His dignity as supreme Mediator? This remains intact, for no mediator is or can be made equal to Him, and the greater the number of secondary mediators the more resplendent is the greatness of the primary and supreme Mediator, just as the supreme general's title to glory is the greater the more numerous are the inferior generals under his command.

We pray to the saints and the virgin Mother of God but we pray to them that they may pray for us: *"Pray for us—intercede for us, through Jesus Christ our Lord,"* is ever our cry, and by

it we affirm that our trust is ever and always in the one Mediator, Jesus Christ.

If we consult the Bible the matter is quite as clear. St. Peter and St. Paul in their Letters frequently commend themselves to the prayers of the faithful and promise to pray for them in turn. If the living may ask the patronage of those still on this earth, why may they not also have recourse to those now in heaven, who have reached the end of their pilgrimage? Will those, who are now on high, be less inclined to pity than they were here below? Do not they who are enjoying the bliss of God see our needs now more clearly? Now that they are in heaven, has the love that burned so warmly in their hearts for their suffering brethren while they were on earth grown lukewarm and languid? Are the prayers of God's children less pleasing to Him in heaven than they were on earth?

Peter assures his dear brethren that he will remember them after he is dead. How and where if not by praying for them in heaven? Some of the Gentiles, not presuming themselves to approach Jesus Christ, appealed to Philip, and Philip appealed to Andrew, and both Philip and Andrew became mediators for them with the Master. And the divine Master was not offended.

Did not Mary without being asked intercede

with Jesus in behalf of the young married couple of Cana and obtain the favor of His first miracle? And will He not do in heaven what He deigned to do on earth? And do we not read in the Apocalypse that the saints present to God the prayers of the faithful? And is not this to discharge the office of mediator with God?

Hence you see that both human reason and faith bear joint witness to the Catholic doctrine of devotion to the saints and their invocation, and prejudice alone, excusable it may be in seasons of heated controversy, could have darkened the reason of our Protestant brethren when they rejected it as a superstition and an affront to God.

It is, then, a good thing, pleasing and agreeable to God, to honor and invoke the saints and the Mother of saints. It is to honor God Himself, to give an added efficacy to our prayers, to strengthen our faith and animate our hopes; it is to extend the glory of God, which is so beautifully and luminously reflected in the saints; it is to multiply the mysterious currents which pass between earth and heaven; it is to unite in a closer brotherhood those who dwell in glory on high and the soldier in conflict here below, and to hasten their union about the throne of Jesus Christ, their leader and glorious conqueror; it is to recall to those of the army of Christ on

earth the glorious deeds of their brothers in heaven and to stimulate them to emulate their generous achievements; and, finally, it is to move those happy souls to look down upon this land of exile, to remember us who are still engaged in a desperate conflict, to hold out to us a helping hand, and to continue toward us the works of that charity which is perfected there on high and is their blessedness for evermore.

DISCOURSE VI

Heaven

CERTAINLY the most delightful subject that can engage our attention is Heaven, the happy eternity for which we were created and for which we all, even unconsciously, yearn.

Who is the man who does not feel deep down in the depths of his soul an irresistible and mysterious force urging him and impelling him onward in the search for happiness? We are like the stars scattered throughout the boundless spaces of the firmament, that are ever moving about a common center, unseen because of the immense distance that separates it from them, yet ever drawing them toward itself. And I will frankly avow, my friends, that I feel a repugnance which I can hardly overcome to speak on this subject. And why so? For the same reason the Apostle gives when he speaks of the third or highest heaven into which he was caught up and where he heard secret words which it is not given man to utter. Now if St. Paul heard and saw and in a measure tasted "whether in the body or out of the body he knew not" [1] things he could not utter, what is to be said of us, who

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 3.

can rise but a few feet above the defilement of this earth? Having been born on the earth, having grown up on the earth, always covered with the dust of the earth and bearing about with us the burden of this body, how can we get a knowledge of the things of God and of the spirit except through the deceptive shadows of sense and the dense fogs of this corporeal world? Still both nature and faith incessantly urge us onward toward heaven as our ultimate goal; Jesus Christ speaks of it on every page of Holy Writ; the Church to-day, in making the armies of the saints defile before us, recalls it to our minds and with a holy and tumultuous gladness pours in upon our ears, not once but often the words, "the kingdom of heaven," and bids us "rejoice and be glad because our reward is great in heaven." I shall, therefore, stifle all repugnance, and, borne away on the wings of reason and sustained by faith, I shall endeavor to rise up toward the unapproachable heights of heaven and get a glimpse of that limitless ocean of light, in which the angels and saints have been happily shipwrecked. One thing alone I wish to impress upon your minds, and it is this: After I have said all I can of heaven and as well as it is possible to one as insignificant as I to say it, say to yourselves: "All we have heard is not an infinitesimal part of the truth; rather, it is absolutely nothing."

Heaven or *Paradise* in Christian language signifies the uttermost term, the complement of all our hopes, complete and perfect felicity. It signifies a state exempt from every evil and filled with every good, both of soul and body, a good that will endure forever.

Where is this place, this abode of delight that is designated by the word "heaven" or by others of equivalent meaning? The inquiry is useless, inasmuch as *heaven* or *paradise* indicates, not a place, but a condition of things. The question, "Where is heaven?" is ingenuous and childish; Holy Writ and all ecclesiastical tradition speak always of heaven, but they do not give a hint or a shadow of suggestion as to where it is. To search for heaven is to search for God and to inquire in what sort of place He abides. Who makes heaven? God and God alone, by manifesting Himself; and hence wherever God unveils Himself to men and angels, there is heaven; and hence also the phrase of the great poet: "Paradise is everywhere," is profoundly philosophical and theological. God is everywhere and fills all things, not alone with His wisdom and power, but with His very essence, as faith and natural reason teach, and therefore heaven may be anywhere.

To fancy that heaven is above us or beneath us, that it is up among the stars, that it is, at

it were, in some vast city surrounded by walls, having scattered here and there rising slopes, magnificent gardens, and cooling fountains, and rich in everything that man regards as beautiful, lovely, and delightful, is quite natural to human nature, which can not rise above the things of sense, but all this does not answer to what reason enlightened by faith demands; it is a creature of the imagination, but it is not heaven.

It is indeed true that angels and still more man, especially after he will have taken up again his body, now glorious but circumscribed, must occupy some place, whatever and wherever this may be, and in consequence their heaven will be there where they find themselves; hence it will be always true that wherever they are this will be heaven for them, and it is also true that where God unveils His face there will heaven be, since it is heaven to see and love God. And now, my friends, let us enter upon this difficult subject.

The idea which divine revelation gives of Paradise, and which is to be found in all catechisms is very simple, namely: A state in which there is no pain of body, no sorrow of soul, and no fear of either under any possible form, and in which there is the assurance of the tranquil and secure fruition of everything that is good and of all true joys, so that man can say to himself: "I do not desire anything more, I am happy."

But to get a clearer insight into all this it is necessary to go into the subject in detail, and on the one hand to keep before the mind the teachings of faith, and on the other the exigencies of human nature.

Human nature, as an abiding place, is composed of two substances, the one spiritual, the other corporeal; and although these two substances are temporarily disunited by death, there will come a time when they will be reunited nevermore to be separated. As the substance of human nature is two-fold, so also is the felicity that corresponds to it two-fold; although the person that is made happy in these two distinct substances is but one.

And first of all let us consider the body, or the less noble of the two. What will be its happiness? First, everything not compatible with its happiness must be set aside. Away, then, with all pain, that comes from any internal change of the elements of which it is composed; away with all disease and aches and with all the causes of them, whether from within or from without; there shall be no longer passions to torment it, nor hunger, nor thirst, nor old age, nor debility, nor loss of strength, nor fatigue, nor heats, nor piercing cold; all within and without the body will be in perfect and constant equilibrium; there will be a perpetual renewal of energy and an im-

mortal youth, so that there will be nothing to desire, nothing to fear, nothing to remove, nothing to change or correct. All the senses will have the true and lawful pleasures that befit them; the eyes will have light, the ears harmony, the palate sweetness of taste, and the sense of smell fragrance; and each in the measure and variety that will delight without cloying, stimulate desire without the vexation of want, and satisfy without the disgust of satiety. How all this will be brought about He knows to whom all things are possible.

All the pleasures of the body there on high will be those which will befit what St. Paul calls a spiritual body, a body agile, light, incorruptible, free, loosed from all the low and groveling needs that harassed it here below—a body after the pattern of the adorable body of Jesus Christ. There will be about it nothing of earth or of matter, nothing coarse; all will be pure and heavenly and worthy of a soul living in the bliss of God, and, as far as its nature permits, attracting to itself the body, its companion for all eternity.

As the source of merit is in the soul and from the soul passes by contact into the body, which is the executor of the soul's will, so also the source of happiness is in the soul, and from the soul has its counterpart in the body.

The soul will be truly happy when it is free from all anguish, and fear of anguish, and when the needs and the cravings of its faculties, both those that arise out of the exigencies of its nature, and those far higher and nobler that rise out of the supernatural potency that faith and grace have deposited there, will be completely satisfied.

In that blessed abode the trials that arise out of ignorance and passion will wholly cease, as will also the fears, the distrusts, the doubts, the jealousies, the perplexities and all the ills that here below plague and distress the soul. Let us pursue the matter more in detail.

There are two faculties through which the human soul displays its activity, namely, the intellect and the will; and into these two faculties God has engrafted two other marvelous powers or forces, belonging to an order incomparably higher, namely, faith and sanctifying grace. The complete possession of an object corresponding to these forces or powers, both natural and supernatural, bears the soul onward to its perfection and by consequence to its perfect happiness. Give to the intellect, exalted by faith, the complete possession of all truth of which it is capable and it is at rest and happy; give to the will the complete possession of all good, so that its every craving is filled, and it wants no more,

and feeling that all desire within it is quenched, it says: "Now I am happy."

Now God is truth, the fountain of all truth, whether of the natural order or of the supernatural, because all truth comes from Him alone, as light comes from the sun; God is *the Good,* the fountain of all goodness, in every order of things; immediately to possess God, then, is to possess all truth and all good, and therefore true and perfect happiness. It is worth while to develop this thought more fully, and I ask you to follow me attentively.

A house or a royal palace, or any work exists, both as a whole and in all its single parts, in the mind of the architect and builder before they set to work to build or execute it, and it exists in their mind in a more perfect way than they can possibly realize in its construction, since do what they can the construction never quite equals the ideal in their mind. The whole created universe, including all its parts, all its rational creatures, whether of earth or heaven, all their various forces and powers, all their laws and most diverse aptitudes, all comes from God, wholly and always from God; so that outside Him there is only nothingness. Hence, all that is true and good and beautiful in this world, or in all worlds either existing or possible, all severally and distinctly, pre-exists in God, the Cause of all causes,

just as the rays that come forth from the sun are all in the sun, or as a force, that moves a body, is in the cause that moves it. Hence to see God unveiled is to see in Him the universe in all and in each of its parts, including all the relations, laws, and properties of each creature, all in action, and all in one single instant. True, the mind can not know all, as God knows all, in a single act, since this is not possible to a creature, but it can know as much as is possible to its finite nature elevated by grace and the light of glory. Let us fancy, my friends, that it were permitted us to enter into the minds of such great geniuses as Galileo, St. Thomas, Napoleon, and others; is it not true that we should see there all their thoughts, all the truths known to them, and as they were known to them? Is it not true, that if it were given us to enter into the minds of Michael Angelo, of Leonardo da Vinci, of Raphael, of Canova, we should see there all their great creations, and better even than if we saw the works themselves set before us? Is it not true that, if it were possible for us to penetrate into the mind of each individual man, we should read there all the thoughts, united together and distinguished one from the other, both those to which he had given expression in word or work and those that remained in a purely ideal state? Is it not true that we should read there

his entire life, brought together in a single point, and yet distinguished into the countless acts, into which it expanded during the period of its activity? Who can doubt it? No one save him who can not reason, for it is a truth so evident as to be indemonstrable that effects are all contained in their causes, as water in a spring from whence it comes, or as a tree in a seed from which it sprouts. In the very act, then, in which the soul fixes its gaze on the divine Essence, it clearly sees God there, it sees what He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do; it sees there the whole universe, from the least creature to the greatest, and it sees all the laws to which creatures are subject. Whatsoever exists outside God, stretching away into time and space, is all there unchangeably true and luminously manifest, and the mind roams over all at its leisure, and is so filled and inundated with light that it is blissfully satiated and cries out: "O Lord, great is Thy name, and Thy wisdom is without bounds." It sees there not only how God creates things and puts into each a force befitting its nature, but it sees also how with infinite wisdom and power He rules and governs all things, how He provides for every single creature and develops its energies; how He provides the food for the microbe that lives and careers in a drop of water, as if it were in a boundless ocean,

and for the hippopotamus that skulks in the canebrake; how the loving care of each creature is ordained for the care of all others, and how everything conspires to the good of each being severally, and to all combined.

And, my friends, observe that in the bright mirror of the divine Essence, we shall see, besides the archetypes of all creatures and their countless relations one to another in the purely natural order, over and above these and marvelously woven into them in an infinity of ways, the supernatural order of revelation and grace; and we shall see the point of contact between divine grace and free will, their ineffable espousals, the works that come from them, and the reason why some of them are done in obedience to the voice of God and others in rebellion against it. There will be seen the complete story of the life of every man, of every family and nation and of the whole human race, and we shall see how the thread of God's providence binds together the past and the present, and all individuals one to another, yet without harm to the liberty of any, and how all this prepared the final triumph of God's mercy and justice. We shall see those depths of darkness, those inexplicable mysteries, that were a torment to our intellects here below, disappear under the effulgence of divine light. What a spectacle will be unfolded before our intellects!

How beautiful and just and holy everything will seem! What a cry of admiration and joyousness will break forth from the deepest depths of the blessed soul, and what a hymn of thanksgiving will go up from its inmost being!

Nor is this all. Every created mind may be regarded as an abiding center of activity whence go forth, like rays of light, thoughts, affections, desires, and works. Now these centers, these created intelligences, as you know, number millions and millions. Who can number all the angels, all the children of Adam that have been and will be? The very thought staggers the imagination. Now, if the mind is equal to it, let it take in in imagination all the acts, all the thoughts, all the affections, all the desires, all the deeds of those millions upon millions of intelligent beings, together with the causes that inspired and moved them, with the infinite interweaving of the surroundings and of the concurrence of free wills that modified their actions, and the relative responsibility of each, which is lost in the depths of every conscience. My God! What a colossal accumulation of truths. And all are primarily in God, and are completely there as in a first cause, since all these intelligences unfolded their thoughts and did their works only in so far as they received from God the force and the power to do so, and hence what they

thought and willed and did pre-existed in God, as the tree pre-exists in the seed, as an effect pre-exists in the cause. Hence in seeing God as He is, we shall be able to see successively, rapidly, and at will the billions and trillions of thoughts and deeds of all intelligent beings. In short, in seeing God we shall see in Him the entire world with all its wondrous laws, and we shall see it, not superficially, as we do now, but we shall penetrate into its depths, into the inward constitution of every body and of its single parts down to the very least. In seeing God, we shall see in Him and through Him all the countless heavenly bodies created by Him, in comparison of which our planet is less than a drop of water in respect of all the waters of the ocean, less than a bit of dust in respect of the mass of this earth. In seeing God we shall see in Him and through Him, or we can see, the intellectual and moral world, the ineffable government of Providence, all created minds with all the productions which constitute their glory. In seeing God we shall be able to see in Him and through Him, what He has done and why He did it, and we shall be able to enter upon the confines of the possible and see what He could have done and did not do, and why He willed not to do it, and why it was wise to do or not to do, as He willed. Now I ask, my friends, does it seem

possible to find a vaster field than this, or one more enchanting, through which the mind of each may range at will without ever coming upon a shadow of a doubt to halt it, or a difficulty to vex it, or a mystery to humble it? Nay more, the soul shall see God Himself in His Essence, not hindered by the mist of created things; it shall see Him not only as the Cause of all creatures and their preserver, but it shall see Him in His nature; and in this nature it shall see the Father, whose origin is from none other, who is of Himself, the Principle without a principle; it shall see Him begetting by an eternal and most simple act of His mind the Son, equal to and consubstantial with Himself; it shall see the Father with the Son by a single and eternal act producing and breathing forth the third Person, the Holy Ghost, the infinite and consubstantial emanation of both. It shall see the infinite Being, evolving and completing the cycle of its inward life in the Trinity of Persons, which gives out and loses nothing, which receives and is not increased, which changes and is not changed, which is all Being, all Intelligence, and all Love, which, while loving, rewards and punishes, because it can not hate.

It shall see, yes, it shall see that it can not comprehend this infinite Being, but is comprehended by it, and far from lamenting that it

can not comprehend it, it will rejoice at it, and will be eternally and blissfully bathed in this ocean of light and truth and love, which gives in the measure of the ardor of him who receives, and in which each will be sated, and will rejoice in the felicity of others as in his own, because it is abundant for all and outstrips the wants of all, is ever old and ever new.

Have I said all, my friends? No, no; I have but spoken in stammering and halting terms of the felicity the soul derives from the mind possessed of the Fountain of all truth; but the will rather than the mind is the home of happiness; it begins in the mind, it is completed in the will; it blooms in the former, in the latter it is matured. The wave of happiness sweeps over the heights of the intelligence, rushes down upon the shores of the heart, and inebriates the will. This is necessarily drawn towards what the mind holds out as good and beautiful, lovable and perfect, and reaches out toward it in proportion to the force it possesses, and to the degree of beauty, goodness, material or moral perfection with which the object is embellished. Now what will happen at the moment when the soul will open its eyes to the Beatific Vision? In a flash will be revealed to it all the beauty, goodness, and perfection of the divine Being. To see it and to feel welling up from the lowest depths of the will an irresist-

ible force, which will carry the soul forward and hurry it on to plunge itself into that immense ocean of all good and of all felicity, will be but a second. The soul, being already like unto God by grace and therefore fit to unite itself intimately to Him, casts itself into that ocean with the impetuosity of a stone that falls by its own weight toward its center. It feels that it is all God's and always His and is wholly penetrated by Him. All its powers of knowing and loving, aided by the divine light that inundates the mind, and continuously flows over from the mind into the will, have their fill, so that it feels it can not know or love more than it now knows and loves, and in this blessed impotence all its every wish is gratified, its joy and its happiness are complete, complete because it has not a shred of a desire that is not satisfied, for it possesses that Good which contains in Himself every other good, and it knows and feels that this Good will never be taken from it, and will never grow less throughout all the ages of eternity. It knows and feels that there will never come an instant of time when weariness or the desire of any other good whatsoever will be mingled with its fulness of felicity, because the Good it possesses and by which it is pervaded is infinite, and in an infinite diversity of joy weariness is impossible, and because it knows and feels that outside the Good, that

is all its own, there is only nothingness, and nothingness can have no attraction for it. The soul will then make God's will perfectly its own; He in it and it in Him;

> "Like a wheel
> Ever in motion, by love impelled." [1]

as the poet divinely sings, and in its everlasting motion finds its everlasting peace.

Have I showed you what heaven is? Have I described its everlasting delights? No, my friends. We have only seen some sparks of the blinding light that fills that blessed abode; we have but tasted some drops of that torrent of sweetness with which God, according to Scripture phrase, inebriates the souls of the saints. No this is not heaven; it is a hundred, a thousand times more beautiful and happy, more blessed and glorious than even the most sublime intelligence that approaches nearest to God can possibly conceive, because heaven is God Himself, and who can speak worthily of God? Who can comprehend Him? Who can describe the joys with which He floods the hearts prepared to receive Him? No one.

The sun was setting and it seemed to sink like an immense ball of fire into the waves of the Tyrrhenian Sea. A youth, one of the greatest intellects that has ever honored the human race,

[1] Dante, Paradise, second last verse of the last canto.

stood silent and in deep thought at a window that looked out upon the sea. Beside him stood a woman with tranquil and joyous countenance, whose eyes from time to time were fixed with inexpressible love upon the youth. They were Augustine and Monica. They had come from Milan to Ostia and were awaiting a vessel to carry them across to Africa, the home of their birth. After having long gone astray in mind and heart, after long and terrific internal conflicts, Augustine had at last found in the Catholic faith the rock to which to make fast the bark of his spirit, which had been so fiercely battered. He had received Baptism at the hands of St. Ambrose and he now tasted the pure joys of that peace which passes all understanding. His mother, Monica, a pattern wife, mother and widow, was overjoyed at having brought back to the Faith her Augustine and at having made him again her son according to the spirit. I shall translate that incomparable dialogue that took place between these two souls and in which elevation of thought and goodness of heart are wonderfully interwoven. The dialogue turns upon heavenly blessedness, and, if I mistake not, I can not make a better ending of this Discourse, than by reproducing here this masterpiece of Christian wisdom.

"We were alone," says St. Augustine, still un-

der the influence of the holy enthusiasm of his recent conversion and of the joyousness of his new life, "we were alone and conversing happily together, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out to the things that are before, and we were searching by the light of truth, which was present to us, and which Thou art, O Lord, what is to be the everlasting life of the saints, that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. Opening the mouth of the heart we gasped for the streams that rush forth from Thy fountain, from the fountain of life that is in Thee, that our thirst, according to our capacity, being somewhat quenched, we might in thought be able to rise to such a height. And when in our discourse we reached the point that any material pleasure whatever, even the purest, is not even to be thought of as compared with the blessed life in heaven, raising ourselves on high with a glowing affection we little by little passed through all corporeal things, and beyond the very firmament where shine the sun and moon and stars. And while in thought we soared still higher, discoursing and admiring Thy works, O Lord, we reached the limits of our own minds and went beyond them, until we touched upon the region where all things perennially abound, where Thou dost everlastingly feed Israel with the food of truth, and where life is

Wisdom, that Wisdom whereby all things were made that were and shall be; but Wisdom was not made, but is, and as she hath been, so shall she be forever, and in her there is no "have been" or "shall be," but only "to be," because she is eternal, and "to have been," and "shall be" are not eternal. And while we were discoursing and ardently panting after her, we slightly touched her with extremest thought and a sigh leaped forth from the heart and there we left the first-fruits of the Spirit, and fell back again into the noise of our tongue, where the spoken word begins and ends. . . .

"We then said: If to any one the tumult of flesh were hushed, hushed the visions of earth and water and air, hushed the bounds of the heavens; aye, and the very soul be hushed to herself and cease thinking and rise above herself; hushed the dreams and fancies of the imagination, and every tongue and sign and whatsoever has a transitory existence; if to this man all were hushed, since to him who listens all things say: 'We made not ourselves but He made us who abideth forever;' if all things were hushed and He alone speaks, who created them, and speaks not by means of them, but by Himself, so that we might hear His word, not resonant upon the tongue nor through angel's voice, nor through the tones of riven clouds, nor in figures and similitudes, but might

hear Himself, whom we love in these things, as lately in a flash we touched in thought the eternal Wisdom which is over all; if this could be, and if the sight of everything else whatever could be taken away, and this Wisdom alone could absorb and take into itself him who beholds it, so that life might be forever as that single moment of bliss, which we sighed after, would not this be *to enter into the joy of the Lord?* And when shall that be?

"All this was I saying and the while the world and all its delights became vile and despicable in my sight, and then my mother said: 'My son, for my part I no longer find any pleasure in anything in this life. What do I here longer and why I stay, I know not, now that all my hopes here are realized. There was only one thing that made me desire to linger on this earth, and this was to see thee a Catholic Christian before I died. This God has granted to me above measure and now that I see thee despising all earthly happiness and become His servant, what do I do here?'" [1]

[1] Confessions book ix, n. 23–26. To some this quotation of St. Augustine may seem too long for a Discourse, nor do I say that they are wrong. But in these pages the saint has condensed, if only they are comprehended, such a wealth of wisdom and has drawn out what heaven is and the felicity of the saints in a way so stupendous and with such elevation of thought and sweet and tender melancholy of sentiment, that I could not resist the temptation to give the passage entire. Have I erred in doing so? If so, it is not the first error I have made in this work on the Christian Mysteries, but it is the last.

Five days later that holy soul entered into heaven, and the son, weeping, describes her last moments. Any one who reads these truly sublime words traced by the pen of Augustine and enters into their meaning can not but feel a lively and yearning desire to quit this land of exile and tears and enter into that which is our abiding home, where God Himself, our Father, the spring of all truth and of all good, will be our everlasting reward.

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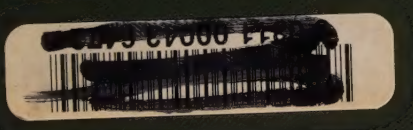
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